Mary Fanton Roberts: An Analysis of her Art Criticism in The Craftsman and The Touchstone

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Abstract

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This thesis will examine the art writings between 1906-1921 of critic and editor Mary Fanton Roberts (1864-1956), who also wrote under the pseudonym of Giles Edgerton. The first two decades of the 20th century was a time when the question of American identity in art was being debated and new artistic theories were emerging. The purpose of the study will be to analyse her articles on the visual arts, focusing specifically on her changing views about American nationalism in two art journals that she edited: Craftsman (1905 – 1916), and Touchstone (1917 – 1921). While Mary Fanton Roberts is well-known for her writing on the decorative arts and interior decoration, an examination of these concerns is beyond the boundaries of this thesis. Rather, this study will attempt to analyse the definitions and meaning of art Fanton developed as an editor and critic for these two publications. More specifically, I will analyse how her ideas about national identity in art evolved throughout the two journals, and how new opinions developed as the decades progressed. Furthermore, her arguments will be discussed in relation to the theoretical position adopted by Robert Henri as he was a highly influential figure in her personal and professional life.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my initial thesis supervisor, Professor Sandra Paikowsky: not only did she suggest the subject for this study, but she also was exceptionally generous in allowing me to consult the material on Mary Fanton Roberts she has acquired over the years. A patient and caring mentor, she is now listed as a reader: the sudden death this summer of her husband, the important Canadian painter John Fox, led her to turn the final phases over to Dr. Catherine MacKenzie. I also thank my other reader, Dr. Loren Lerner, for her rapid responses to my text. Additionally, I should like to acknowledge the professors throughout my graduate studies in the art history department whose classes and teachings provided me with ability to develop a breadth of perspective and understanding in regards to art history and critical thinking.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents Sharleen George and Claude Deblois, my sister Sarah and my partner Denis Martel for their support throughout this academic journey; they showed me the importance of courage and tenacity.

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Introduction

The New York City Art Community in the Early 20th Century

At the turn of the twentieth century, New York City was undergoing a period of drastic urbanization; the city was expanding industrially at an unprecedented rate, one of the factors that attracted a variety of immigrants. An estimated two million people lived on the small island of Manhattan in the early twentieth century, and more were arriving everyday. A flow of people from Russia, Eastern Europe and Italy, as well as a larger numbers of African-Americans from the south, flocked to the city for better jobs and life opportunities. However, with the arrival of all these people came further overcrowding and impoverished neighbourhoods. One half of all New Yorkers lived in miserable poverty, shunted off into crowded, rundown and unsanitary tenements in the poor areas of the city. In addition, nearly 1.5 million people laboured in sweatshops, worked on the docks, and performed other manual and menial labour for wages that barely sustained life.[1] It was not unusual at this time to see workers protesting in the city for social reforms and improved living conditions. Photographers such as Jacob Riis (1849-1914) had already begun to document some of the atrocious conditions of New York growing 'slums' in the 1880s and some twenty years later, artists who lived in New York City began to give witness to the physical and social changes that continued to challenge the crowded urban centre.[2] Many began searching for aesthetic strategies that would create visual connections between their lives, their work and this increasingly crowded, heterogeneous urban environment.[3]

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[1] William B. Scott, and Peter M. Rutkoff, New York Modern: The Arts and the City, (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1999): 18

[2] Bonnie Yochelson, and Daniel Czitrom, Rediscovering Jacob Riis: Exposure Journalism and Photography in Turn-of-the-Century New York, (New York : New Press, 2007): 14. Jacob Riis was a self-taught photographer and journalist for various newspapers such as the New York Tribune and spent his career chronicling the grim realities of America's urban poor by providing dramatic visual commentary on the tenements, sweatshops, and street life of the city's poor and homeless

[3] Frances K. Pohl, Framing America: A Social History of American Art (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2002): 302

Before the 20th century, art critics and the art community in general tended to ignore native American artists, with collectors choosing instead to purchase works by European artists.[4] Art was still primarily purchased from Europe, and stylistically the work tended to be conservative and conventional. The National Academy of Design was founded in New York City in 1826 and was the official institution for the fine arts community. Its primary purpose was to help establish standards and tastes in the United States by giving classes and mounting exhibitions. There, students improved their skills and presented their work at the annual spring exhibition, a venue also open to the public. A jury system of honoured academics, many of whom were well-established American artists, selected the top student works, which were then placed in the exhibition in a hierarchal order. It must be said, however, that the condition of art in America up until the 20th century was in a relatively poor state, even with the presence of the Academy of Design. More precisely, the technique and style taught by the Academy tended to be restrictive, conventional, and imitative of more traditional European influences. It openly rejected new styles and art movements such as Post-Impressionism that were being developed at the same time in Europe. Instead, they preached traditional notions of art as a refined and uplifting ideal, one inspired by beauty, balance and symmetry. Because of this, American students who had the opportunity to study overseas at the end of the 19th century often did so in order to compete with their European counterparts. In essence, American artists such as Kenyon Cox (1856-1919), John W. Alexander (1856-1915) and Robert Henri (1865-1929) went abroad to learn European academic techniques, to find more variety in style and artistic subject matter, and to learn what they needed to know to become competitive with European artists. While in Europe, American artists had the opportunity to see different landscapes and scenery, to meet peers of diverse nationalities and to learn from artists of various movements.

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[4] Arlene R. Olson, Art Critics and the Avant-Garde, New York 1900 – 1913, (UMI Research Press, Michigan, 1980): 14. Although most collectors and art galleries favoured European artists, there were always some exceptions; a few American artists like John Singer Sargent (1856-1925), who spent most of his career in England, and John H. Twachtman (1853-1902) had well-established careers in America.

Certain artists decided to align themselves with international art ideals and practices in order to sell their works in an American market that still demanded European standards.[5]

However, by the early 1900's, art conditions in American art schools were slowly improving, and artists like Robert Henri, Rockwell Kent (1882-1971), Boardman Robinson (1876-1952), and Edward Hopper (1882-1967) were willing to discover American traits and the distinctions between their art and that of other nations. Furthermore, the changes happening in New York City brought forth questions and new ways of thinking about American national self-identification within the art communities.[6] Many artists, like those mentioned above, attempted to record the political and social turmoil of the early 20th century, giving attention to the "real" as opposed to the "ideal" in their work. Whereas art had been defined as the realm of beauty and perfection in the academies of the late 19th century, artists now wanted to depict both the beautiful and the ugly as they co-occurred in a rapidly changing world.[7] The New York City art community would view and adopt new artistic ideologies throughout the first two decade of the 20th century. The Armory Show of 1913, an exhibition in New York City which included works of avant-garde European art movements like Cubism and Post-Impressionism rocked the beliefs of the many American artists and art critics who immediately realized how provincial their artistic techniques were when compared to what was being created in Europe. The exhibition forced both artists and art critics to reflect on the importance of modern and traditional artistic styles, and many wanted to push art into new realms of visual possibilities, such as abstraction.

The horrors of World War I would also become a determining force during this time and caused many artists to re-think how they viewed the world in relation to themselves. More precisely, issues around American nationalism evolved during this period; during the war, artist

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[5] Ibid., 15.
[6] Mathew Baigell, Artist and Identity in 20th Century America, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001): 27
[7] Pohl., 302

and art critics alike believed the center of the art world would shift to the United States, and that the emphasis would be on American instead of European art. Furthermore, the art community believed that the effect of war would purge the decadence of modernism, which was seen by conservatives as an attack on freedom and American values.[8] However, this prediction proved incorrect since in the United States, modernism was to become a major concern in the 1920's and 1930's as art critics and artists came to terms with the highly complex aesthetic theories related to this progressive art form.[9] Artists who were concerned with this phenomenon were now pulled towards new definitions which included questions about artistic independence and freedom of expression.

Art galleries became more numerous and diversified in orientation in New York City during this time, some focusing on showing works by American artists, while others attempted to introduce avant-garde works by both American and European artists. The Macbeth Gallery, founded in 1892 by William Macbeth, was the first gallery in New York to deal almost exclusively in American art; it sponsored not only the important exhibition by the Eight in 1908, but also showcased works by such notable American artists as Frederic Remington (1861-1909), Childe Hassam (1859-1935), Maurice Pendergast (1858-1924) and Arthur B. Davies (1863-1928). Another more radical gallery, founded by Alfred Stieglitz and called 291, also opened its doors from 1905-1917. This gallery was the first to present in the United States works by Auguste Rodin, Paul Cézanne, and Henri Matisse, and it was also the site of the first American showing of the works by Pablo Picasso in 1911. Other galleries which opened in New York City at the turn of the century included the Montross Gallery, the Whitney Studio Club and the Milch Galleries.

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[8] Milton W Brow, American Painting: From the Armory Show to the Depression (New Jersey: Princeton University Press., 1955): 85

[9] Susan Noyes Platt. Modernism in the 1920's: Interpretation of Modern Art in New York from Expressionism to Constructivism (Michigan: UMI Research Press., 1985): 1

Art criticism in periodicals and newspapers also went through significant changes in the early 20th century. During the previous century, editors of newspapers and periodicals generally forced art critics to review the works of artists who bought advertising space in their newspaper, rather than the artists and exhibitions the critics actually wanted to discuss.[10] The majority of writers were not experienced in art writing due to a lack of visual experience and to their limited backgrounds in artistic knowledge; many were given the assignments simply because they worked for the newspaper. The criticism of the late 19th century has been characterized as highly superficial; the critic would forgo any extensive analysis and revert to simply translating into words the pictorial image.[11] However, art critics of the early 20th century, such as Elizabeth Luther Cary (1867- 1936), James Gibbons Huneker (1857-1921), Charles Caffin (1854-1918) and Royal Cortissoz (1869-1948) wanted to remedy the incompetence of previous generations. Armed with the knowledge of the aesthetic criteria that had evolved in the last half of the 19th century and coupled with more exposure to the visual arts, these emerging critics embraced higher ethical standards and a broader cultural viewpoint.[12] They wanted to express their own philosophies and wanted their own judgement to guide them. This period also saw a change in political control of newspapers and the rise of independent journalism. Newspapers like the New York Times, the New York Tribune and the New York Sun moved away from a preoccupation with government affairs and attached greater importance to a wider range of newsworthy items. The new journalism was not only relatively independent in its choice of subject-matter but permitted and even encouraged reporters and critics to exploit their personal writing styles. Thus art critics who were confident and knowledgeable enough in artistic principles, broke free from the restraining dictates of

[10] Ibid.,15

[11] Olson, 4. A typical example of the pictorial image translated into written words can be seen in the following quote in B.L.R. Dane, "American Art Criticism," Connoisseur (March, 1888): 130: "Mr. Smith's landscape in autumn is well handled, and shows an excellent feeling for his subject. Perhaps his tones are a trifle cold, but the effects of light show study and care. The composition is good, the treatment sympathetic, and the dead tree in the middle distance is painted with admirable fidelity to nature."

[12] Ibid., 7

editors. Art critics soon began falling into two camps: on the one hand there was the conservative opinion with leading proponent Royal Cortissoz who worked for the New York Tribune and advocated art movements which developed and progressed out of the traditions of the past. On the other hand there was the progressive viewpoint represented by James Gibbons Huneker who worked for the New York Sun and embraced the right of individual expression and was thus open to new avant-garde aesthetics.

Mary Fanton Roberts and the Eight

It was into this changing, vigorous environment that the central figure in this thesis entered. Mary Fanton Roberts (1871-1956) was a New York City writer who throughout much of her journalistic career discussed the developing American art community of the 20th century. After a successful start as a general writer for several newspapers, her career took off as a reporter in the visual arts for the Craftsman in 1906 and she soon became its managing editor alongside Gustav Stickley, the leading American proponent of the Arts and Crafts Movement. When the journal folded in 1916, she founded the Touchstone (1917-1921) and when it also folded, was hired in 1923 and became the managing editor in 1924 of Arts and Decorations. She held this position until her retirement in 1941.

As this thesis will demonstrate, Fanton Roberts became a forceful contributor to the communication of evolving ideas about art, and especially about art in America. There is no question that she was profoundly affected by the art ideas associated with Robert Henri and the New York based Ashcan School or more properly, the Eight and thus any consideration of her work must be prefaced by and understanding of the impulses of this group. Its members were among the first American painters to reject the prevalent and popular styles of academic painting, insisting instead on forging ahead with a new painting style indigenously related to

the American spirit and the new age of urbanization.[13] Robert Henri, John Sloan (1871-1951), Everett Shinn (1876-1953), William J. Glackens (1870-1938), George B. Luks (1866-1933), and somewhat later, George Bellows (1882-1925), rejected the academic idea of 'beauty' in favour of a more expressive urban realism.[14] With Henri as their leader and teacher, they stood for artistic individuality and the freedom to exhibit without the restrictions imposed by the jury set up by the Academy of Design.[15]

Robert Henri had a long and illustrious career. In 1886, he enrolled at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia, where he studied under Thomas Anshutz (1851-1912). He traveled to Paris in 1888 to enrol at the Académie Julian where he studied under William-Adolphe Bouguereau and with time, he was admitted into the École des Beaux-Arts. Although Henri eventually rebelled against the elaborate allegorical figure paintings rendered in a highly finished technique that the Academy was promoting, he absorbed other aspects of the French system. For instance, he adopted the academic technique of making rapid oil sketches, or pochades, either as studies for larger works or as informal outdoor studies.[16] While abroad, Henri also had the opportunity to study the old Masters, finding inspiration in the works by Rembrandt, Frans Hals, Velasquez, Goya and Edouard Manet.

Equally important to Henri's education were his ongoing readings and discussions with fellow students. Especially significant were the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Walt Whitman and Thomas Paine, who emphasized the importance of free thought and free will and the need for action in the present. As a young art student, Henri especially felt the tensions between the credo presented by Emerson and Whitman and the academy's traditional style of

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[13] Patricia Hill, Modern Art in the USA; Issues and Controversies of the 20th Century (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2001): 4

[14] William B. Scott, 22. The artists met in Philadelphia in the late 19th century and worked as illustrators for the Philadelphia Press. By the early 1900's, the group moved to New York City to pursue their artistic careers. George Bellows, one of Robert Henri's pupils in New York City would later join the group.

[15] Ibid, 16

[16] Rebecca Zurier, Picturing the City: Urban Vision and the Aschan School, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006): 110

teaching. His respect for two of Emerson's leading doctrines of self reliance and a reverence for one's individuality was in direct opposition to the Academy whose instructors valued technical facility, workmanship and finish over artistic creativity.[17] In his journals, Henri reflected on the effects of reading Emerson on his own artistic individuality: "Reading Emerson has taught me two great lessons. The first, to believe implicitly that is it worth while to do our best, though what we strive for might not be ours immediately; second, to have self-confidence, to trust our own convictions and gifts such as they are or may become, without echoing the opinions of others...."[18] Walt Whitman's ideologies complemented and strengthened many of Henri's own formulated ideas on individualism, and he recorded his thoughts about this in his writings: "It seems to me that before a man tries to express anything to the world he must recognize in himself an individual, a new one, very distinct from others. Walt Whitman did this, and that is why his name so often comes to me. The one great cry of Whitman was for a man to find himself, to understand the fine thing he really was if liberated."[19] Henri came to imagine the making of art as a noble activity, on the same level as writing, a way for the individual to live a meaningful life and to communicate with fellow beings.

Henri returned to Philadelphia from Europe and eventually moved to New York City in the early 1900's. In New York, he continued to paint and teach classes at the New York School of Art, all the while his ideas about the relationship of art to life continuing to grow and develop. One of the primary concepts Robert Henri developed was the relationship between the work of art and the artist's life: "One must work in the manner that his own mind and nature dictates if he wants to last. What a man says and does in his paintings should be an expression

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[17] Ibid. 111

[18] Joseph J. Kwiat, "Robert Henri and the Emerson- Whitman Tradition", PMLA, vol.7 (September 1956): 618-619

[19] Robert Henri, "Progress in Our National Art Must Spring From the Development of Individuality of Expression: A suggestion for a New School" Craftsman, vol.15 (January 1909): 387 - 401

of his reaction to the life around him."[20] Henri strongly believed that every aspect of the artist - his emotion as well as his intelligence - was necessary for the creation of a work.[21] The finished product would thus reflect not only the subject but the artist's individuality as a whole. Henri insisted that it was impossible to divorce a work of art from the character of its creator. This idea was represented throughout his writings; for instance, during the Macbeth Exhibition in 1908, he wrote: "always art must deal with life, and it becomes important as the ideas of the artist are significant. Art to every man must be his personal confession of life as he feels it and knows it. The lack of human quality in painting or sculpture means the lack of that vitality which makes for permanence."[22]

When it came to the conditions of art in America, Henri did not want artists to passively copy European works but instead urged them to develop their own interpretations of art from life:

> To have art in America will not be to sit like a pack-rat on a pile of collected art of the past. It will be rather to build our own projection on the art of the past, wherever it may be, and for its constructiveness, the artist, the man of means, and the man on the street should go hand in hand. And to have art in America like this will mean greater living, a greater humanity, a finer sense of relation though all things.[23]

Drawing from life made the artist aware that he had a social responsibility to depict conditions personal to his own world.[24] A genuinely American art required not only a search for subject and technique, it also demanded: "a real understanding of the fundamental conditions personal to a country, and then the relation of the individual to these conditions."[25] Essential was: "an appreciation of the great ideas native to their country and then the achievement of a masterly freedom in expressing them. For successful flowering it demands deep roots, stretching far

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[20] Robert Henri's Journal, 6 April, 1890, see Kwiat, 619. The New York School of art was a private school which was first known as the Chase School, founded in 1896 by William Merrit Chase. In 1898, it changed its name to The New York School of Art and since 2005, it is known as Parsons The New School for Design.
[21] Kwiat., 621
[22] Robert Henri, quote in Giles Edgerton, "The Younger American Painters: Are they Creating a National Art" Craftsman, vol.13 (February 1908): 524.
[23] Ibid., 524
[24] Ibid., 525
[25] Robert Henri, "Progress in Our National Art", Craftsman,, 387

down into the soil of the nation, gathering sustenance from the conditions in the soil of the nation, and in its growth showing, with whatever variation, inevitably the best of these conditions."[26]

According to Henri, certain conditions were needed if art was to flourish:

> The men who become the artists must feel within themselves the needs of expressing the virile ideas of their country; they must demand of themselves the most perfect means of so doing, and then what they paint or compose or write will belong to their own land. Why here in America, we have a country filled with energetic people. We are a distinct race; we have tremendous ideas to express, and often it seem to me that I cannot wait to hear the voices of these people. And the voice must be beautiful, and the content of the voice, the thing that we have to say as a nation, that will be a wonderful thing to utter! It is a great encouragement that already fine and strong notes of this voice have come to us.[27]

Henri asserted that the American art world needed "art that expresses the spirit of the people today", and that spirit would be voiced by young people who represented progression and advancement through their art: "I personally want to see things advance. I want to see work done better by others than I found possible in my life. I want to see progress."[28] He developed a term in his art theory called the "Art Spirit" which represented this artistic progress.

Research Questions

This thesis will examine the art writings of critic and editor Mary Fanton Roberts, who also wrote under the name Giles Edgerton, between 1906-1921, the years during which she edited and contributed a large number of substantial articles to Craftsman (1905 – 1916) and Touchstone (1917 – 1921).[29] While Mary Fanton Roberts is well known for her writing on the decorative arts and interior decoration, an examination of these concerns is beyond the boundaries of this thesis, which seeks instead to take up the part of her arts writing about which almost nothing has been published to date.

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[26] Ibid., 387
[27] Ibid., 391.
[28] Robert Henri, "The New York Exhibition of Independent Artists" Craftsman, vol.18 (May 1910):165
[29] The reason Mary Fanton Roberts chose this pseudonym remains unknown.

As already indicated, the first two decades of the 20th century were a time when the question of American identity in art was being debated and new artistic theories were emerging. The purpose of the study will be to analyse Mary Fanton Roberts' articles on the visual arts in relation to those debates, establishing the definitions and meanings of art Fanton developed as an editor and critic for the two major art journals she edited. Major emphasis will be placed on discerning the nature of her views about American nationalism in art. More specifically, I will analyse how her ideas about national identity in art evolved throughout the two journals, and how new opinions developed as the decades incorporated in this study progressed. Throughout, her arguments will be discussed in relation to the theoretical positions adopted by Robert Henri as he was an influential figure in her personal and professional life, and by other members of the Eight for whom he also served as a mentor and with whom Fanton Roberts enjoyed close relations.

As an art critic and editor, Mary Fanton Roberts did not, however, restrict her attention to issues of nationalism in art or to the work and thoughts of the Eight. She also examined, or ensured the examination of works made by many other artists. Her writings on their art will be scrutinized closely, with a view to establishing the full scope of her interests in the visual arts and the debates associated with them.

The ultimate goal of this thesis will be to begin the process of assessing what Mary Fanton Roberts' general contributions as art critic and editor were to the art community during the first two decades of the twentieth century.

Methodology

The methodology of this thesis is grounded in content analysis and includes both primary and secondary sources. It is guided by the research questions mentioned above. The primary sources include Mary Fanton Roberts personal letters, notes and professional

correspondence, now housed in the Archives of American Art (Smithsonian Institution). Her correspondence with her brother-in-law and writer Sir Charles G.D. Roberts (University of New Brunswick), Robert Henri (Harvard University Archives), and Margery Ryerson's Personal papers housed at the Archives of American Art (Smithsonian Institution) help define Fanton's ideas about national identity and the role of art in the New York community.[30] The articles written by Mary Fanton Roberts, Robert Henri, William J. Glackens, George Bellows, Everett Shinn, and John Sloan in Craftsman and Touchstone were analyzed to understand the development of her artistic theories. Comparisons between her writings and those by other art critics such as Elizabeth Luther Cary, James Gibbons Huneker and Charles Caffin will be made in order to position her art writings within a larger , New York based art historical context.

The perspective on American art both voiced and published by Mary Fanton Roberts will also be analyzed in light of more recent art historical texts and theoretical points of view as expressed in the writings of Bernard Perlman, Arlene Olson, David Bearinger, Milton Brown, and Patricia Hill.

Limits and Limitations of the Study

The two primary documents for this study, Craftsman and Touchstone, could not be obtained in Canada and have not yet been microfilmed in their entirety in the United States. Working from the New York Public Library's holdings, I was not able to obtain complete copies of all of the volumes of either Craftsman or Touchstone. Volume 13 of Craftsman (October 1907 - March1908), was missing from the New York Public Library, and is not available elsewhere. Furthermore, in Volume 31 (October, 1916), most of the pages were ripped out. Touchstone was also incomplete with missing pages in Volumes 3 and 4 and

[30] Painter and print maker Margery Austen Ryerson (1886-1989) not only established a reputation as an artist but also an editor of one of the better-known books in American art, The Art Spirit, which is a compilation of Ryerson's notes from the painting classroom of Robert Henri. She proposed the idea to Henri, and they worked together on the editing and completed the project for publication in 1923.

Volume 2 was absent from the New York Public Library. I was able to order some of the articles that were missing from the volumes of both Craftsman and Touchstone, through Concordia's inter-library loan division, or to access others through the internet, but some were unfortunately impossible to consult.[31] Annex 1 provides the list of all the articles written by Mary Fanton Roberts on visual art mentioned in the two periodicals, Craftsman and Touchstone, the data related to the former greatly facilitated by the Craftsman Index available at www.historicalworks.com/index.pdf.

[31] The articles that I was not able to retrieve from Craftsman were : Mary Annable Fanton, "Sculpture in Wood: Marvellous Work of Riemenschneider, Still to be Seen in Southern Bavaria" Craftsman, vol.9 (January 1906): 476-481; Giles Edgerton, "Millet as an Etcher: Some Reminiscences of Wyatt Eaton at Barbizon" Craftsman, vol.13 (October 1907): 50 – 58; and Giles Edgerton, "Millet as an Etcher: Some Reminiscences of Wyatt Eaton at Barbizon" Craftsman, vol.13 (October 1907): 50 – 58.
The articles that I was not able to receive from Touchstone were: Mary Fanton Roberts, "Painting Real People is the Purpose of George Luks Art" Touchstone, vol.8 (October 1920): 32 – 38 and Mary Fanton Roberts, "John Sloan: Etcher," Touchstone, vol.8 (December 1920): 224 -227

Chapter I
Mary Fanton Roberts

Mary Annable Fanton was born on June 1st, 1864, in Brooklyn, New York to William Harley Fanton and Isabelle Agnes Annable.[1] As a young girl, Fanton traveled throughout the United States to places as far away as Deadwood, Montana, because her father worked as a mining developer. At the age of 15, she was sent to the Albany Female Academy where she eventually decided to become a journalist. According to her unpublished autobiography, A Point Of View,[2] her family was going through some financial difficulties while she was a student, and so she knew it was necessary to choose a career where she could make her own living. Moreover, she had an ability to write, a skill that likely prompted her decision to pursue journalism.[3] After completing school, Fanton became a staff writer for four years for the following New York City newspapers: the Herald Tribune, the Journal, the Sun and the New York World.[4] Writing for the New York World was one of the first permanent positions she held. In her autobiography, she wrote that she quickly proved herself at the New York World by getting exclusive interviews from important and fashionable people in New York City society. Fanton's evidently charming personality and ease within different social circles won her a reputation as an exceptional journalist, and in doing so, she received numerous assignments. However, much of what she wrote during her stay at the New York World was considered of a sensational nature, and when her mother discovered that she was interviewing local prostitutes for an upcoming report, her family forced her to resign from the newspaper.

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[1] Fanton had an older sibling, J. Belle Fanton, who eventually became a nurse.

[2] Much of the biographical information on Mary Fanton Roberts was derived from the *Mary Fanton Roberts Papers*, Archives of American Art (A.A.A.), Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C., reel D161. There is also an unfinished and unpublished autobiography by Fanton entitled "Point of View" which can be viewed in reel D161.

[3] *MFRP*/AAA, reel D161

[4] "MRS W.C. Roberts, Writer, Editor, 85" New York Times, 15 October 1956. There is also a letter written in 1903 from the Editor's office of The Sun stating the following "Dear Miss Fanton: your fashion articles seem to be satisfactory; at all events, we have no suggestions for the ones of next week and those to follow during Miss Hoyt's absence. With thanks for your promptness, yours very truly, Charter D. Lord." See MFRP/AAA, reel D162.

Following her departure from the New York World, Fanton also wrote for and became editor of Demorest Magazine,[5] editor-in-chief of New Idea Woman's Magazine, and worked for a time on the editorial staff of the Women's Home Companion.[6]

In 1905 Fanton was hired by Gustav Stickley to work for Craftsman magazine as an arts, music and decorative arts journalist. By 1906, she was promoted to associate editor. Gustav Stickley was the best-known American affiliated with the Arts and Crafts Movement, a term used for the field of applied design in which simplicity and hand fabrication were key factors in creating architectural and interior designs.[7] Stickley created the first truly American furniture that was known throughout the United States as 'Craftsman'. More importantly, he founded the Craftsman in October 1901 in order to promote his philosophy about the Arts and Crafts Movement. Over Fanton's eleven year career with this magazine, she wrote forty-three articles on various topics such as music, photography, architecture, interior decoration, and crafts. With both Stickley and Fanton as editors, the magazine's interests became more widespread over its sixteen years of publication as it incorporated broader political, cultural and artistic views. Stickley had used Craftsman as a means to write on a variety of subjects in the Arts and Crafts Movement, such as different building styles and techniques, but after 1906, the journal eventually grew to include other topics such as social and national issues present in America. For instance, there were articles discussing the value of education in the field of manual labour, and the education of the blind.[8] As Stickley explained in his book entitled Craftsman Homes:

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[5] There is a letter of 5 May 1898 to Mary Fanton Roberts, editor of Demorest Magazine from Elizabeth Jordan thanking Mary Fanton Roberts for publishing an article in the magazine. See MFRP/AAA, reel D162

[6] M.K.P. "Mary Fanton Roberts" Archives of American Art Journal, vol.4, no.1 (January 1964): 11; also see MFRP/AAA, reel D161-162. Unfortunately her years before Craftsman remain obscure since not much information is known about her employement with the other magazines.

[7] Gustav Stickley, Craftsman Homes (The Craftsman Publishing Company, 1909): 198

[8] Some of the articles focusing on social causes include: Edward Carpenter, "Value of Manual Labour to Society" Craftsman, vol. 14 (April 1908):64-73; Arthur Davis Dean, "Relation to Manual Training in Public Schools to Industrial Education and Efficiency" Craftsman, Vol. 14 (April 1908): 74 -81; Stanley Johnson "Physical Culture for the Blind: What it has done to Increase the Resources of the Afflicted and to Make Possible a Normal Development" Craftsman Vol. 14 (Sept 1908): 644-649.

> But as the Craftsman grew and step by step attained a wider outlook, the question of the study of handicrafts as an end in itself gradually sunk to a position of minor importance in the policy of the magazine. Our belief that in it lay the foundation of all growth was no less, but the field was so broad that the record and discussion of all constructive work in the larger affairs of life came gradually to take first place....As we began to design houses and to shape the idea of the Craftsman country home, we took up the subject of architecture and interior decoration, doing our best to promote the establishment of the right standards and to offer all the aid in our power towards the development of a national spirit in our architecture. This naturally led to other forms of art, and the Craftsman became a magazine for painters and sculptures as well as for architects, interior decorators and craftsmen.[9]

Stickley wanted to describe not only dominant European trends and ideas in the Arts and Crafts Movement, but also to advance and celebrate American design, architecture and art. In this context, Craftsman was an instrumental magazine for early American culture as Stickley made a concerted effort to discuss and promote American freedom and ingenuity. Chapter II of this thesis will investigate how Fanton also used the Craftsman as a forum to promote her own ideas about American art and identity.

By the middle 1910's, Stickley was facing financial problems, in part due to the fact that the Arts and Crafts style was no longer in vogue. He also made the unfortunate decision to invest much of his finances in 'Craftsman' furniture and the Craftsman farm situated at Parsippany, New Jersey, and refused to adapt both personally and financially to the changing times. The result was that Stickley's company finally had to file for bankruptcy in 1916 with the last issue of Craftsman being printed in December 1916.

Although Fanton was no longer working for Stickley, she remained very much involved in the journalistic and cultural milieu of New York City. She continued writing as a free-lance journalist for newspapers and periodicals such as the New York Sun and the Herald Tribune. Her next important move was the founding of the art and culture magazine entitled Touchstone, in existence from 1917 – 1921.[10] Like Craftsman, this magazine discussed trends

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[9] Stickley, 202 – 203.

[10] How Fanton financed this periodical is not known. However, her husband William Carman Roberts might have helped; his obituary in the New York Times advised that in 1917 William organized the Garden Tower

in art, music, architecture, photography and interior design. No article on the 'Craftsman' style was published in Touchstone; instead the magazine focused on different trends and styles in the United States and around the world. Its mission was to present new and original ideas about art by presenting the works and philosophies of various artists of different nations such as Théophile Alexandre Steinlen (1859-1923), Boris Anisfeld (1879-1973), Mahonri Young (1877-1957) and Max Weber (1864-1920). Some of the permanent Touchstone staff included Marguerite Wilkinson (1883-1928)[11], Eloise Roorbach (1868-1961) [12] and Harold L. Van Doren (1895-1957). [13]

Unlike Craftsman, Mary Fanton Roberts' new publication was concerned about World War I since the United States joined the conflict in April 1917, and featured many articles commenting on the war effort and the social changes happening in America and Europe; such articles discussed democratic issues in America[14] and social controversy in Europe.[15] More specifically, as editor and journalist for the magazine, Fanton described the artistic happenings of the art world in New York City and discussed the trends that were significant to her; a discussion of these writings will be found in Chapter 4 of this thesis. However, the magazine only lasted four years and in June 1921, the Touchstone was taken over by The Arts

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Corporation to take over a contract for the purchase of Madison Square Garden for $2,400,000. Unfortunately, because the title was not clear, the deal was not completed. In 1921, the appeal decided that the New York Life Insurance Company had to return the 100000$ William deposited as a binder for the contract. Thus once can posit that William had the finances to help Fanton found her periodical. See "W. C. Roberts Dies, Ex-Magazine Aide," New York Times, 23 November 1941

[11] Marguerite Wilkinson was a Canadian-born journalist and published poet. She won the national arts prize offered by the Poetry Society of America, of which she was a member. She contributed frequently to literary and popular magazines. Some of the articles she wrote in Touchstone were: "Poets Song of Tears and Laughter: A Poem" Touchstone, Vol.7 (April 1920):59 ; and "Amy Lowell", Touchstone, Vol.7 (June 1920): 219

[12] Eloise Roorbach was associate Editor and head of the Garden Department for Touchstone. She also published articles for Craftsman and Arts and Decoration. In Touchstone, some of her articles included: "A House Rich in all Treasures" Touchstone, Vol.7 (April 1920): 3-9; and "Romance and History Told in the Architecture of the Spanish Wing of the Mission Inn; Myron Hunt, Architect" Touchstone, Vol.8 (October 1920): 13-17

[13] Harold L. Van Doren's was a well-known American industrial designer. Some of his articles included: "Chez Renoir at Cagnes" Touchstone, Vol. 8 (October 1920):19-27; "Some Aspects of the French 'Moderns'", Touchstone, Vol.8 (November 1920):100-107.

[14] Marguerite Wilkinson, "Democracy and Working Women: Their Intimate Relation Revealed by the War," Touchstone, vol. 3 (June 1918): 242-248

[15] Pierre Hamp, "How French Women are Saving the Industries of their Own Land" Touchstone, vol.1 (September 1917): 524

magazine.[16] The founder and editor of The Arts, Hamilton Easter Field, wrote a note in the first page of the June issue discussing the merger :

> Business conditions have been very bad, so that it is not surprising that the *Touchstone Magazine* has had difficult in weathering the storm. When it became evident that it would be impossible to continue publication, Mary Fanton Roberts decided to entrust to me whatever could be saved from the wreck. THE ARTS, therefore, has taken over the *Touchstone Magazine* and the *American Art Student*, which merged with the *Touchstone* a few years back. Mrs. Roberts considered her editorship of the *Touchstone* a labour of love. It has been arranged that if, in the future, she should be in a position to resume the publication of her magazine she will have entire liberty to do so. In the meanwhile, she will write each month for THE ARTS, so that she will not lose touch with her old readers. The office staff of the *Touchstone* is also now with THE ARTS.[17]

The Arts included an arena for art reviews called 'Touchstone', which allowed Fanton to publish her opinions in each issue. In the June issue, she wrote the following statement in the 'Touchstone' section:

> When I realized that I must, at least temporarily, give up the TOUCHSTONE, I thought of a number of magazines which might fill our subscriptions, but in the end I came to the conclusion that THE ARTS, with its beauty of form and substance would in the long run prove the most satisfactory. All of us today who have thought much of a real democracy, believe I am sure, that in its most enlightened form it must have, as a foundation, a growing art among the mass of the people, and an opportunity for the true and wide enjoyment of beauty. No country can truly be said to appreciate beauty unless it is creating its own art. In Mr. Field's magazine you will find more painting and sculpture than music and drama. But this opportunity to come very close in touch with all that is new and vivid in American art as well as much of the splendid art of Europe of a generation nearly gone will, I am sure, prove of vital interest. Mr. Field ask me to furnish a TOUCHSTONE department each month, which will contain "whatever I enjoy writing about". In availing myself of this opportunity, it goes without saying that music, drawing and poetry as well as art will be my inspiration. I should like here to thank Mr. Field or this chance to keep in touch, not only with my old TOUCHSTONE friends, but with that phase of life, the world of art, which has been a source of so much joy to me. Several people have sympathetically said to me "What a pity the TOUCHSTONE has failed." I always feel surprised when I hear this, and a little shocked. You see it has never occurred to me the TOUCHSTONE has failed. I don't think and ideal can fail. The TOUCHSTONE was founded very definitely on the ideal that art must belong to all the people and that the growth of a nation must be out of, and up through, a universal love of art. If this ideal were realized, every man would have the right to all the loveliness in the world, and to create and enjoy beauty in his own way. It was because of this belief that the pages of the TOUCHSTONE were always held open

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[16] Llyod Goodrich, "The Arts Magazine: 1920-1931," American Art Journal, vol.5 (1973): 80
[17] MRFP/AAA, reel D161

> for any new expression of beauty. We always felt, of course, that historical art was a fine background for life, but we felt much more strongly that living as we do in this rich, vivid, and thrilling civilization, we surely had a right to the kind which would express our daring, emotional life....Until the later part of May, it did not really seem that we would have to give up the magazine: we were moving rapidly each month, always up-grade. But in spite of our earning capacity, monthly increasing, we could not keep far enough in advance of those sinister shadows in the publishing world – printing, paper and engraving. The general increase of our magazine expenses from January 1917, to March 1921, averaged from 150 to 300 per cent, and our subscription price had been increased just 25 per cent. That tells the story in a very few words.[18]

Following the termination of Touchstone, Fanton also created and edited Decorative Arts, and worked briefly as editor of House and Garden from 1922 to 1923.[19] In November 1923, Fanton was hired as a writer by Arts and Decoration, and by January 1924 she had become its managing editor. Arts and Decoration (1910 – 1942) focused primarily on architecture and the decorative arts. Most of the articles in the monthly magazine centered on architecture, interior design, industrial arts in American and also Europe, and these included subjects like "The Decorative Value of Austerity" and "Great Modern Hotels of America."[20] However, in every issue, there were articles specific to the fine arts; these included "'The Art Spirit' by Robert Henri" [21] by George Bellows, and 'Great Italian Paintings in American Collections"[22] by Guy Eglinton. As announced in the 1924 May issue of Arts and Decoration, a board of consulting editors was elected to help select the topics for the magazine. The members of the board were: artist and art teacher Robert Henri, architect Ralph Adam Cram (1863-1942), sculptor Gutzon Borglum (1867-1941), architect Alfred Bossom (1881–1965), writer Henry Louis Mencken (1880–1956), actor and producer Augustin Duncan (1874–1954),

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[18] MFRP/AAA, reel D161. There is also a letter from Mary Fanton Roberts which was sent to her subscribers on 27 May 1921 describing in similar ways why Touchstone was discontinued, and transferred to The Arts magazine, MFRP/AAA, reel D163

[19] There are trade bulletins for House and Garden written by Mary Fanton Roberts. See MFRP, (AAA), reel D161

[20] Harold Donaldson Eberlein, "The Decorative Value of Austeriy," Arts and Decoration, vol.20 (November 1923): 42 – 43; Frederick Hamill, "Great Modern Hotels of America," Arts and Decoration, vol.24 (November 1925): 62 - 65

[21] George Bellows, "'The Art Spirit' by Robert Henri" Arts and Decoration, vol. 20 (December, 1923):26 - 29

[22] Guy Eglinton, "Great Italian Paintings in American Collections," Arts and Decoration, vol.21 (June 1924): 34-41.

decorator Ruby Ross Goodnow (1880–1950) and writer Harold Donaldson Eberlein (1875-1942). The board of consulting editors changed membership over the course of the magazine's existence, with example Robert Henri bowing out in March 1926. In 1925 a new section in the magazine was created and called 'In Her Office.' Fanton used it to provide a synopsis of the articles that were to be published in the future issues. She did not use 'In Her Office' to critique or review any exhibition or artist, but instead discussed the reasons she chose to add certain articles and to inform the readers of some idea of the difficulties that can come from publishing the issues. For instance, in the 1925 May issue of 'In her office,' she wrote the following comment on the role of her editorship:

> Editors have so often invited their readers to share with them the difficulty of getting out a magazine by making interesting suggestions for articles, that I hesitate to say how interested and pleased I would be if conscientious readers would now and then send me letters saying preferably how much they like the magazine, but also not failing to say how much they would like articles we have never published, or how little they like some we have published.[23]

Documents in her personal papers suggest that the magazine experienced a period of financial difficulty in 1925. The owner of the periodical, E.F. Warner, sent a memorandum to Mary Fanton Roberts reporting on the lack of memberships and highlighted some of problems related to the editorial, advertisement and circulation departments.[24] Among the many issues, Warner stated that a need to secure well-known writers who were authorities in their field was a priority if the journal hoped to appeal to a larger audience. By 1928, the periodical seemed to have improved, since Fanton received a note from the head of the advertising department, J. A. Judd, praising her May edition: "I think it is quite the most interesting issue you have brought out in a very long time, and I want to extend my sincerest congratulations."[25] She remained with Arts and Decoration up until her retirement in 1941.

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[23] Mary Fanton Roberts, "In Her Office," Arts and Decoration, vol.23 (May 1925): 82
[24]MFRP/AAA, reel D161
[25]Ibid

As mentioned previously, Fanton was an integral part of the artistic, literary and cultural world of New York City. Due to her work as a critic in the art community, she was acquainted with and befriended numerous well-known artists, authors, and performers. Among her many friend were the writers John Butler Yeats (1839-1922) and Theodore Dreiser (1871 – 1945), who is said to have used her as his model for Miriam Finch in his 1915 novel The Genius. Considered an autobiography, The Genius explored the multiple conflicts between art and business, art and marriage, and between traditional and modern views of sexual morality.[26] The Genius was deemed so shocking that its sale was immediately prohibited by the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice.[27]

Fanton was a recognized supporter of modern dance, and her close friendships with Isadora Duncan and the members of the Ballets Russes led to her making a major contribution to the Dance Archives of the Museum of Modern Art at its founding in 1930.[28] Fanton also wrote two books on decorative arts entitled Inside 100 Homes published in 1936 and 101 Ideas for Successful Interiors published three years later.[29] She also actively participated in many artistic and literary clubs such as the New York Letters Club, the New Society of Artists and the Association of American Artists.

In 1897, while working as a journalist for various periodicals, Fanton met the Canadian Sir Charles G.D. Roberts (1860-1943) through a mutual friend, Colonel Edwin Emerson (1869-1959). Fanton's introduction to this famous Fredericton, New Brunswick poet and writer who would publish The History of Canada in the same year, would eventually lead her to meet her future husband William Carman Roberts (1875-1941).[30] Although married, Charles Roberts became enamoured with the young and dynamic journalist; affectionate and intimate letters

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[26] Jerome Loving, The Last Titan: A Life of Theodore Dreiser, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005):279

[27] "Call The Genius Indecent," New York Times, 2 May 1918

[28] MRFP/AAA, reel D163 - D164.; The Museum of Modern Art Dance Archives, New York City

[29] Mary Fanton Roberts, Inside 100 Homes, (Robert M. McBride & Company, New York City, 1936); Mary Fanton Roberts, 101 ideas for Successful Interiors, (Robert M. McBride & Company, New York City, 1939)

[30] *MRFP*/A.A.A, reel D161

were sent throughout the years with some even describing how he felt towards her, as evidenced by a note accompanying a copy of his book entitled The Book of Roses: "I was badly in love when I wrote this."[31] Charles G.D. Roberts became Fanton's devoted friend and cavalier, and they remained close friends until his death in 1943. In 1904, while in Fredericton, Charles discovered through his sister Jane Elizabeth Roberts (1864-1922) that Fanton was in love with his younger brother William. In a letter written that same year to Fanton, Charles explained his feelings for her and the surprise and inevitable disappointment he felt when he discovered her affections for his younger brother:

> I think it will not surprise you to learn that (my) attitude changed somewhat when I learned, on authority which (I) could not well discredit, of the way you had talked to my sister of you being so ardently and devotedly in love with my brother Will at the time you were in Fredericton last spring – and while I had every right to believe that you were in love with me. This discovery, which was so at variance with the explanation which you had given me, was a severe shock to me...A talk with Janie set my mind clear, and made it easier for me (to) reconcile myself (to) the complete loss of you...I was not angry, only overwhelming sorry and heart-sick, when I found out that you had been in love with Will all the time you were assuring me otherwise.[32]

According to the information in C.G.D. Roberts's letters as well as those that Fanton sent to members of the Roberts family over the years, this 'lover's triangle' did not affect relationships within their large family. Fanton was much loved and appreciated within the Roberts circle; she spent many summers in Fredericton and maintained her correspondence with William's three siblings and also writers- Charles, Theodore Goodridge Roberts, Jane Elizabeth (later Macdonald) and cousin Bliss Carman who established his own important career in New York.[33] Both Charles G.D. Roberts and Bliss Carman published poems in Craftsman and

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[31] Laurel Boone (Ed.), The Collected Letters of Charles G.D. Roberts (Fredericton, Goose Lane Editions, 1989): 208.
[32] Ibid., 270-71
[33] There are clipping of different letters from each family member in MFRP/AAA, reel D164

Theodore Goodridge Roberts and Jane Elizabeth Roberts Macdonald contributed poems to Touchstone.[34]

Mary Fanton Roberts met her future husband William Carman Roberts (1874-1941) most likely through his older brother, Charles. Biographical sources do not indicate how and when they actually met, though it was sometime between 1897-1904 in New York City. Although no sources to which I had access indicate the exact date Mary and William became engaged, Fanton wrote to William between the fall of 1904 and the fall of 1905 while she was traveling around Europe, a trip which took her to the Netherlands (Amsterdam, Rotterdam), Holland, Belgium, England (London), and Germany (Munich). Throughout her trip, Mary sent numerous letters and postcards to William, describing her trip, her feelings, the people she met, and what she did. Many entries in her letters detail her longing to be with him again and how lonely she was without him. There is nothing in her own accounts that would explain why she left for Europe for almost a year; the question remains ambiguous whether she left for work or more personal reasons. One letter dating 4 September 1905 from William gives no specific answer: "please be very careful and good to yourself, and come back home with the thing you went in search of."[35] Whatever reason for her European sojourn, her career certainly benefited from the extended trip since she experienced much art and culture while traveling, and the experiences she derived from the trip had most certainly influenced her ideas about American art and identity

Mary Fanton Roberts and William Carman Roberts married on December 14th 1906, and were never to have children. The couple had two homes; one at 142 East 18th Street, New

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[34] Charles G.D. Roberts wrote the following poems in Craftsman: "Wayfarer of Earth: Poem," Vol.11 (December 1906): 347, and "Oh Earth, Sufficing All Our Needs," Vol.11 (February 1907): 677. Bliss Carman wrote the following poems and short stories in Craftsman: "The Ghost House: A Quiet Day in the Catskills,", Vol.10 (June 1906): 279; "The Use of Out of Doors" Vol. 11 (February 1907):422; "The Leaven of Art," Vol.12 (April 1907): 147-153; "A Measure of Heaven: A Poem," Vol.29 (February 1916):467. Theodore Goodridge Roberts published the following poem in Touchstone: "(The) Fifes," Vol.1 (June 1917):284. Jane Elizabeth Roberts Macdonald published the following poem in Touchstone: "Leaves: A Poem," Vol.5 (October 1919):159

[35] MFRP/AAA, reel D161

York and another in Waterford, Connecticut. Born in Fredericton, New Brunswick, William first arrived in New York City in 1897 to join his brother Charles G.D. Roberts at the Illustrated American. He also wrote short stories and poems, and in 1899, William Carman Roberts with his brothers Charles and Theodore, and his sister Jane, published a book of poems titled Northland Lyrics.[36] He was employed as the political editor of the Literary Digest in New York City, and eventually became its Editor-In-Chief, working for the periodical for more than 30 years.[37] The Literary Digest was an influential general-interest magazine published by Funk and Wagnalls in early 20th century United States. The first issue was in 1890 and by 1938 due to reorganization of the company, the Literary Digest was bought out by Time Magazine.[38] An important feature in the Literary Digest was its straw vote on national elections, which successfully forecast the Presidential vote in 1920, 1924, 1928, and 1932. In 1936, the magazine determined that the Republican candidate Alf Landon would take the presidential race. However, Franklin Roosevelt ended up winning by a large margin, creating a major scandal for the magazine.

It is interesting to note that Fanton and William Carman sometimes published each other's opinions on art and politics in the periodicals for which they worked. For instance, the 6 April 1907 Literary Digest issue had an unsigned article titled "What American Artists Should Paint,"[39] which discusses how American artists should present scenes from their homeland, and not mimic European standards. The author used a long insert from Fanton's essay in Craftsman entitled "Is America Selling her Birthright in Art for a mess of Potage? Significance of this Year's Exhibition at the Pennsylvania Academy"[40] as the main point of the article.[41] William Carmen wrote two essays in Craftsman on political issues in America: "Are We Becoming

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[36] William Carman Roberts *et al*,. Northland Lyrics, (Boston : Small, Maynard, 1899)
[37] "MRS W.C. Roberts, Writer, Editor, 85" New York Times, 15 October 1956
[38] "Literary Digest Halts," New York Times, 25 February 1938; also see MFRP/AAA, reel D162
[39] "What American Artists Should Paint," The Literary Digest (April 6th 1907): 544 – 545.
[40] Giles Edgerton, "Is America Selling her Birthright in Art for a mess of Potage? Significance of this Year's Exhibition at the Pennsylvania Academy" Craftsman,, vol. 11 (March 1907): 657 – 670
[41] May Fanton Roberts' essays and opinion on American art will be discussed further in the next chapters.

Civilized too Rapidly"[42] in 1910 and "Vitality of the Monroe Doctrine"[43] in 1914. William Carman Roberts also taught at New York University; papers in the archives lists him as a 'Special Lecturer' for current events between 1915-1916, and between 1916-1917 he was cited as a lecturer for journalism.[44] During World War I, William Carman enlisted and did his service training camp in Ottawa before heading out to Europe from 7 September to 6 December 1918.[45] It also appears that William Carman suffered from depression during certain periods in his life, and some of the letters between the couple indicate that he underwent hospitalization. Given that several other members of the Roberts clan also suffered from depression, this would not be surprising. On 22 November 1941, at the age of 64 years old, William Carman Roberts passed away of a heart attack as he was being taken to the Lawrence Memorial Hospital in New London, Connecticut.[46] After her husband's death in 1941, Fanton moved to the Chelsea Hotel, where she lived for the rest of her life. She died on 14 October 1956.[47] In her will, several works of art were donated to the University of New Brunswick, including an undated beach scene by William Glackens and an unidentified charcoal portrait by John Sloan.

Mary Fanton Roberts was one of the Eight's most loyal supporters and continuously gave them positive press throughout their artistic careers. Along with her husband, she also maintained lifelong friendships with some of the Eight's wives, including Marjorie Henri, Dolly and Helen Farr Sloan, and Irene Glackens. Fanton's relationship with Robert Henri was in many ways fundamental to the progress and promotion of the Eight's works and ideologies. They had met towards the beginning of the 20th century, presumably through mutual friends. In her autobiography, Fanton described how a group of artists and literary figures would gather at

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[42] William Carman Roberts, "Are We Becoming Civilised too Rapidly" Craftsman, Vol.17 (January 1910): 355 - 359
[43] William Carman Roberts, "Vitality of the Monroe Doctrine" Craftsman, Vol.25 (June 1914): 311-314
[44] Annual Catalogues 1915-1918, New York University Archives, Elmer Holmes Bobst Library
[45] MFRP/ AAA, reel D161
[46] "W.C. Roberts Dies: Ex-Magazine Aide" New York Times, 23 November, 1941
[47] "Mrs. W.C. Roberts, Writer, Editor, 85" New York Times, 15 October 1956

a French restaurant called 'Petit Pas', on West 29th Street. As she wrote, these meetings: "soon became the 'stamping ground' for a group of writers and artists. We sat at Mr. [John] Yates table, which no one joined without an invitation from old John himself. It was an interesting crowd of people that gathered there, including the Robert Henri's, the John Sloan's, the W. J. Glackens, King of the Literary Digest, the Coburn Players, Nicholas Vashel Lindsay, Gertrude Atherton, now and then Richard Le Gallienne, and less often Theodore Dreiser."[48]

In 1917, Robert Henri painted Fanton's portrait, which today is in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.[49] A note by Henri to Mary Fanton Roberts, dating 1917, describes what he thought of the portrait: "Dear Mary, I am very pleased with it. I approve of the touches in w[hich] you have made and I have added a little myself with black water color to take off a little shine from edge of her left shoulder (fur). You can see by holding it in off light. I think our three days happy party has a good record in the portrait although you know I wish it were a hundreds times more worthy of."[50] The two corresponded through postcards, letters and invitations and often described the goings-on in New York City. Sometimes the letters would be on a more personal level; when the Henris discovered that William Carman Roberts was to join the war in 1918, Marjorie sent a letter on Sunday, 20 September 1918 confiding the following:

> Dear Mary and Bill, we got your letter yesterday and wanted to yell – don't let Bill go. No matter what. You need him, we need him – everybody needs him – and we can't be done without. No reason is big enough. I know he'll say – but if everyone thought that way – etc – there will be no one to fight – well let there be no one – Get the old king of England and the Kaiser have a hand to hand fight and settle it that way....If Bill went N.York would never be the same - for us – so don't let him. I wouldn't let Bill – even if he were desperate to.[51]

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[48] MFRP/AAA, reel D161.
[49] Figure 1
[50] MFRP, AAA, reel D162. Robert Henri did not put down to date on the letter, only the year. Interestingly, additions to the portrait and Henri's appreciations of these changes demonstrated well their friendship and mutual trust.
[51] MFRP/AAA, reel D162

Interestingly enough, discussions about the artists' art production seldom appeared in these letters as the correspondents preferred to discuss social events they attended, and/or the people they saw at dinner parties, balls and the theatre. Henri and his wife Marjorie also wrote regularly to Fanton and William Carman Roberts while on their trips to Europe and different parts of the United States; most of the letters describe their travels in detail, including the people and places that they encountered as well as the experiences they lived. On the more rare occasion, letters between the Henris and the Roberts briefly mention his painting trips. For instance, on 10 October 1917 while visiting Santa Fe with George Bellows and their families, Robert Henri wrote a letter to the Roberts stating: " Geo Bellows and Family here. Geo and I are now going out daily on auto trips painting out of doors. Spent today in the Pueblo of Tesuque north of here. Have had beautiful trips and fine air...."[52]

The letters between Mary Fanton Roberts and the Henris were very much letters of support, appreciation and encouragement. In 1908, after Fanton published Henri's manifesto in Craftsman, "Progress in Our National Art Must Spring From the Development of Individuality of Expression: A suggestion for a New School,"[53] he sent her a letter thanking her for her continual support: "I thank you for your idea of having me express through the Craftsman the principles that have been making such a long and uphill fight for. The article will do away with many false impressions that have gone abroad through misquotations. I hope it may be read everywhere."[54] When Fanton founded Touchstone in May 1917, Henri and Marjorie subscribed to the magazine immediately, and even sent a note to Fanton in 6 April 1917 saying: "Long live 'Touchstone'."[55] Comments of appreciation for certain articles or issues in the magazine were also common. For example, in an undated letter, Marjorie wrote a get-well

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[52] Robert Henri to Mary Fanton Roberts, 1917, Robert Henri Papers, Beinecke Library, Yale.
[53] Robert Henri, "Progress in Our National Art Must Spring From the Development of Individuality of Expression: A suggestion for a New School" Craftsman, vol.15 (Jan 1909): 387 – 401. Letter dated 23 December 1908
[54] MFRP, AAA, reel D162
[55] Ibid

letter to Fanton which noted that the last issue had grabbed her attention: "The Touchstone for this month is a wallop - I read it all and I think it's the best number yet – The Anne O-Hagan story is a marvel...and how I enjoyed myself to the limit with the magazine."[56] In 6 November 1923, while visiting Madrid, Marjorie Henri congratulated Fanton on getting the job at Arts and Decoration:

> We are as happy as can be to hear that Arts and Decoration have gotten you. Bob sat down and sent them a subscription, the first they've had from us in nearly two years – we know you will make it a success so here is our first wishes, that it will eat up every other magazine of the same breed....very few people can bring back to life a magazine that's been on the downward grade – which we know is what you'll do if you get half a chance.[57]

14 March 1924, Robert Henri sent Fanton a letter explaining his likes and dislikes about Arts and Decoration magazine, and how he wished it would come to resemble Touchstone more closely:

> We got the magazine, and are eagerly hoping to see it grow up out of its weeds to look like the Touchstone. And while I am saying this, I might as well go on and say that, in my valued opinion, it should be the same size as the Touchstone for several reasons. One – an art magazine is so often kept and bound – and the current A&D is too big for this – not of course to big to be bound but too big to put on a shelf when it is bound. And a book that is too big for a shelf is at the bottom of a pile of other books too big to move....Besides, the pages are hard to fill – pictures get lost on too much empty white paper space and lines about don't do the trick – they only advertise the emptiness....Success to Arts and Deco! And long live her captain!

In 1923, Robert Henri published his well-known book entitled The Art Spirit.[58] Fanton helped promote it in two very important ways. First, she gave the publishers of Robert Henri's book, J.B. Lippincott Company, the list of all the former subscribers to Touchstone – 6000 names in total.[59] Secondly, in the 1924 December issue of Arts and Decoration, Fanton

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[56] Ibid. Anne O'hagan wrote a short story titled "(The) Return in the December 1919 issue of Touchstone, see Anne O'Hagan, "(The)Return" Touchstone, vol.6 (December 1919):181

[57] MFRP/AAA, reel D162

[58] Robert Henri, The Art Spirit, Philadelphia and New York: J.B. Lippincott, 1930

[59] There is a letter dating 19 September1923 from Fanton to Margery Ryerson confirming that she received the names of the old subscribers of Touchstone from the Arts magazine. See Margery Ryerson Papers, Archives of American Art (A.A.A.), Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C., reel 962. There is also a letter dating 3 October 1923 from the publisher J.B. Lippincott Company thanking Mary Fanton Roberts for getting the list of the list of names from Touchstone. See MRFP/AAA, reel D162

published a review of the book written by George Bellows,[60] and praised Henri's teaching as an inspiration to artists, students and art lovers alike. In the same cited letter to Fanton written on 14 March 1924, Henri's satisfaction with his book becomes evident: "Of course I was mighty pleased over the Geo Bellows article about the 'Art Spirit." Isn't it surprising how well the book has done? I hear the first edition is all gone and a new one is about to be out.... I have seen so many long reviews from all over the country – several high in praise that I think it must be about as much a success as an art book can be."[61] It can therefore be said that the Henri's lifelong friendship with Fanton was a support system through which they could mutually motivate, inspire and encourage one another.

Mary Fanton Roberts also maintained life-long friendly contact with John Sloan, his first wife Anna Maria (Dolly) Sloan (1877-1943) and second wife Helen Farr Sloan (1911-2005), William Glackens and his wife Edith Glackens (1876-1955), Everett Shinn and George Bellows. Some notes sent to Fanton exclaimed their gratitude for being published and/or sending varied opinions on the articles in her magazines.[62] One of the best examples of these written exchanges is a letter Edith Glackens wrote to Fanton dating 1909,[63] where she thanked Fanton for publishing Robert Henri's article "Progress in Our National Art Must Spring From the Development of Individuality of Expression: A suggestion for a New School"[64] in the January 1909 issue of Craftsman: "Many, many thanks for the Craftsman. I have already seen the pictures and Henri's article which has delighted me....The Craftsman certainly has spoken out in a fearless way for us many times."[65] Fanton's relationship with the Glackens family extended beyond William and Edith to include their two children, Ira (1907-1990) and Lenna (1913-1943), who considered Fanton both a literary mentor and friend during moments of

[60] George Bellows, "'The Art Spirit' by Robert Henri" Arts and Decoration, vol.20 (December 1924):26-29
[61] MFRP/AAA, reel D162
[62] The correspondence between MFR and the members of the Eight can be viewed in the MRFP/AAA, D162
[63] There is no day and month on the letter.
[64] Robert Henri, "Progress in Our National Art Must Spring From the Development of Individuality of Expression: A suggestion for a New School" Craftsman, vol.15 (Jan 1909): 387 - 401
[65] MRFP/AAA, reel D162

difficulty with their mother Edith.[66] George Bellows also sent a letter to Fanton thanking her for publishing an article about his work. The letter is undated, but states the following: "Thanks for your good note and many apologies for neglecting to compliment you on your flattering article about me. I was tickled to death at my own brilliance which was all yours. This the public may never know, which is a great injustice to you. Little disappointed in the reproductions but it is all in the days work."[67] It can be stated the Fanton not only published the Eight because they were well-known artists of the time, but also because she was a loyal friend, encouraging and promoting them throughout her career as editor. In the next three chapters, Mary Fanton Roberts' writings on art will be analysed in Craftsman and Touchstone, in order to understand how her theories on art evolved into new definitions and artistic principles. As will be seen, Fanton took an particular interest in questioning the role of national identity in art in Craftsman, while in Touchstone, she continued to discuss the visual arts but did so by using a more unifying theory of 'Art for Life Sake.'

[66] Mary Fanton Robert and Ira Glackens exchanged letters during the time his mother Edith Glackens was experiencing health and psychological problems. See MFRP/AAA, reel D162. Mary Fanton Roberts also helped Lenna Glackens publish a book , I want to be a Columnist,(Exposition Press: New York, 1947). Fanton wrote the preface to Lenna's book.

[67] MFRP/AAA, reel D162

Chapter II
"Bone of Our Bone": Mary Fanton Roberts and her Ideas on National Identity in American Art in The Craftsman, 1905- 1916

As co-editor of Craftsman from 1905-1916, Mary Fanton Roberts moved the journal, published by the Arts and Crafts furniture manufacturer Gustav Stickley, from its emphasis on gracious living and social reform toward more extensive coverage of progressive tendencies in literature, drama, dance, photography, and art. During her tenure, a typical issue thus displayed a rich set of offerings. Volume fifteen (dated October 1908 – March 1909) for example, presented a total of ninety-one articles; nineteen of them were on the fine arts, twenty on architecture, twenty-three on decorative arts and five on drama/dance/music. It also included ten short stories or poems and had four essays focusing on social or environmental issues. Each issue of Craftsman included a review section called "Als ik Kan", a quote in Dutch which translated as "If I Can."[1] This section began as Stickley's editorial column where he discussed issues ranging from political corruption, big business, farming and the Arts and Crafts Movement. Art reviews were sometimes present in this section, although no sources indicate that Fanton wrote anything in this section.[2]

Mary Fanton Roberts wrote a total of forty-four signed articles during the lifespan of Craftsman; twenty-one articles focused on the fine arts. Among these, seven were concerned with national identity in American art, five articles were on photography, two questioned the role of women's art in the art community, one was on the Armory Show and the rest were on various American and European artists. As co-editor, she provided other reporters and artists with the freedom to publish their thoughts and opinions on the current art tendencies of New York City. An analysis of these articles will be offered further on in this Chapter as well as in Chapter III, with the focus here being on concerns with issues of national identity and art.

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[1] This phrase was glued, stamped on or burned into virtually every piece of furniture Gustav Stickley manufactured.

[2] Barry Sanders, The Craftsman, An Anthology (Santa Barbara: Peregrine Smith, Inc., 1978): xii

Mary Fanton Roberts' Perspective on American Identity in Art

The years between 1900 and 1915 were very pertinent to the debate surrounding national identity in American art, and Craftsman certainly participated in the proceedings. The question of national identity in art permeated not only essays on the fine arts but also articles discussing drama, architecture and decorative arts.[3] As co-editor of the journal and close friend of Robert Henri and the Eight, Mary Fanton Roberts certainly took a personal interest in publishing articles in Craftsman that discussed this question. This is most obvious between the years 1907 to 1913, when Fanton used Robert Henri and the Eight's ideologies and artistic achievements as examples of what art in America should strive to be. When Fanton wrote seven important articles specifically discussing issues of national identity in art between 1907-1913, but here she used her pseudonym, Giles Edgerton, rather than her own name, perhaps to create distance (a neutral voice) between herself and the members of the Eight.[4] Her friendship with Robert Henri and the Eight was perhaps the determining force that pushed Fanton to assert her position within the debate. The following section will analyze how closely entwined Mary Fanton Roberts writings on national identity in art were with Robert Henri and the Eight's mission for artistic recognition.

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[3] Some of the articles discussing nationalism in the decorative arts include: Giles Edgerton, "The Relation of Mural Decoration to the Vitality of a National Art," Craftsman, vol.14 (April 1908): 65-72; C.H. Forbes-Lindsay, "The Spirit of the West: How its Vigour and Resourcefulness are Affecting the Development of the whole country," Craftsman, Vol.15 (October 1908): 64 -76

[4] These articles include: Giles Edgerton, "Is America Selling her Birthright in Art for a mess of Potage? Significance of this Year's Exhibition at the Pennsylvania Academy" Craftsman,, vol. 11 (March 1907): 657 – 670; Giles Edgerton, "The Younger American Painters: Are they Creating a National Art" Craftsman, vol.13 (February 1908): 512 – 532; Giles Edgerton, "Bronze Sculpture in America: Its Value to the Art History of the Nation" Craftsman, vol.13 (March 1908): 615 – 630; Giles Edgerton, "America Scores a Triumph at the International Exhibition of Painting in Pittsburgh" Craftsman, vol.14 (August 1908): 463 – 476; Giles Edgerton, "Pioneers in Modern American Art: A Group of Men whose Influence has Greatly Aided its Development" Craftsman, vol.14 (September 1908): 597 – 606; Giles Edgerton, "What does the National Academy of Design Stand For: Has it at present a Value to the American Art Public" Craftsman, vol.15 (February 1909): 520 - 532; Giles Edgerton, "American Painters of Outdoors: Their Rank and their Success" Craftsman, vol. 16 (June 1909):275-282. It must be stated that the source of her pseudonym is not known since no information in her private papers indicate why she ever created this alter-ego

The first article that demonstrated Fanton's interest in imprinting a national aesthetic on American art appeared in volume 11 of Craftsman, dating 1907. Entitled "Is America Selling her Birthright in Art for a mess of Potage? Significance of this Year's Exhibition at the Pennsylvania Academy,"[5] this essay, which discussed the 1907 Pennsylvania Academy's spring exhibition, was the first acknowledgement of Robert Henri and the Eight in Craftsman. Here, Fanton discussed the need to break away from imitating foreign influences: "the idea that art is wholly technique, that we as a nation can find our greatest expression while imitating the ways and the methods of France or Holland or England at the easel is to condemn American art at the outset – to take away from us our national birthright for a mess of foreign pottage...A nation has a right to create her own art expression."[6] More precisely, she wanted artists to discover an American expression through the spirit and aesthetics of their own country: "What we need in order to create a further national spirit in our art is not a different country, but a different, new, intelligent, understanding point of view toward our country as it exists."[7] When discussing the works exhibited at the Pennsylvania Academy, Fanton disapproved of the paintings she deemed to be copies of European styles. The works that did catch her eye and garnered her praise are described in the second section of her article, and include the 1906 painting by Robert Henri entitled *La Reina Mora*[8], and *Portrait of the Artist's Wife,* dating 1904, by William Glackens.

In February 1908, Robert Henri, John Sloan, George Luks, Everett Shinn and William Glackens joined forces with Ernest Lawson, Maurice Prendergast and Arthur Davies to organize their own art exhibition called 'Eight American Painters' at the Macbeth Gallery, 450 Fifth Avenue, New York. This exhibition was created as an intentional affront to the rigid and monolithic hegemony of the Academy of Design. More precisely, when works by some of the

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[5] Giles Edgerton, "Is America Selling her Birthright in Art for a mess of Potage" Craftsman,, 657 – 670
[6] Ibid., 658
[7] Ibid., 663
[8] Figure 2

artists Robert Henri admired most, such as Luks and Sloan, were rejected by the Academy jury selection in 1907, Henri protested by withdrawing two of his selected paintings; *The Spanish Gypsy Mother* and *The Matador* both dating 1906.[9] He cited the art establishment's stultifyingly conservative tendencies and its unfair attitude towards younger artists who pursued more innovative painting due to:

> The academy rejects good work right and left and the result is that the exhibitions are dull because they are – dull. There are many, many good painters in the country whose work is never seen on this account. You know how George Luks is rejected time and again....the academy won't let him even exhibit. A splendid painter like Arthur B. Davies had been so badly treated that for years he has refused even to submit pictures to the jury....[10]

Henri also criticized the Academy for determining that good art equalled conservative styles, imitative of a European aesthetic that showed strong workmanship in a high finish.[11] The Academicians judged with severity the Eight's painting depicting such images as the gritty urban scenes of New York, or the daily realities of the ordinary working class, all done in a looser manner with a rougher brushstroke. In addition, Robert Henri called for the development of a 'national voice' outside the confines of the Academy; he wanted American artist to find their own aesthetic styles, while discovering the conditions of their country. By rejecting the Academy of Design's annual exhibition and arranging their own show at the Macbeth Gallery, these men demonstrated, "for the first time in America, that a group of artists who were strongly anti-academic could attract a wide public notice and finance return – not as curiosities, but as significant artists who honestly spoke the language of their own time and place."[12]

To make sure his opinions would be heard, Henri went directly to the press to voice his dissatisfaction with the Academy's practises. A reporter from the New York Evening Post was

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[9] Paintings rejected by the jury included George Luks *Man with Dyed Mustachios*, 1906 and John Sloan's *Foreign Girl*, 1905 .
[10] "Door Slammed on Painters" New York Sun, 12 April, 1907
[11] David B. Dearinger, Rave Reviews: American Art and its Critics 1826-1925, (New York, National Academy of Design, 2000): 67
[12] William Innes Homer, "The Exhibition of the 'Eight': Its History and Significance," American Art Journal, volume 1 (Spring 1969): 63

one of the first to publish Henri's audacious move: "It was expected that Mr. Henri's election to the Academy would prove an opening wedge for the representation of the younger element in our art....The violent denunciations of the Academy's juries...can be remedied by the painters themselves....Let the younger faction start a new organization. The time is ripe...."[13] It was for these reasons that the eight men joined forces and exhibited together in 1908. Indeed, each artist received his own exhibiting space within the gallery, and was able to choose the work to be displayed. These included: Robert Henri's 1907 *Dutch Soldier,*[14] William Glackens' 1907 *The Shoppers,*[15] George Luks 1908 *Mammy Groody,*[16] John Sloan's 1907 *The Cot*[17] and Everett Shinn's 1905 *The White Ballet.*[18] However, As Elizabeth Milroy has pointed out in Painter's of a New Century: The Eight & American Art, the exhibition was probably more ground-breaking for the publicity it attracted as an event in art-world politics, than for the content of the pictures.[19] The exhibition was considered 'revolutionary' because it challenged the selection and display practises of the National Academy of Design.[20] More precisely, through the New York press, the Eight created a buzz by promoting their art exhibition as a political statement and media event, to use today's terminology. For instance, The New York World Magazine described the Eight's exhibition as follows: "Rebels who have dared to paint pictures of New York life [instead of Europe] are holding their rebellious exhibition all by themselves. The question stated by the radical is, shall there be an American art – an art that dares paint New York for instance? Shall the American school displace the schools of foreigners?"[21] It must be stated that Robert Henri's primary aim was not to destroy the

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[13] "National Academy's Scope" New York Evening Post, 9 March 1907
[14] Figure 3
[15] Figure 4
[16] Figure 5
[17] Figure 6
[18] Figure 7
[19] Elizabeth Milroy, Painters of a New Century: the Eight & American Art, (Wisconsin: Milwaukee Art Museum, 1991): 45-46
[20] Ibid., 46
[21] "New York's Art War and the Eight Rebels", The New York World Magazine, 2 February 1908

Academy of Design, but to reform it. His mission was to demonstrate what the Academy could and should exhibit were it to liberalize its membership and jurying policies.

Mary Fanton Roberts was indispensable when it came to helping the Eight promote their convictions about the Academy of Design's conservative and rigid rules. In February 1908, she wrote the essay, "The Younger American Painters: Are They Creating a National Art?,"[22] which explained why these eight artists had decided to exhibit independently from the Academy. She began by stating that when it came to the question of art in America, "the blight of imitation is still upon us."[23] Fanton stipulated that since the Academy of Design and the art collectors valued foreign works over American ones, American artists ended up mimicking the ideas and aesthetic styles of Europe. She confirmed that when the Eight exhibited their work at the Macbeth Gallery instead of the Academy, they publicly demonstrated that:

> Fortunately for the future of art conditions in this country, there has grown up among us a few artists who value the conviction that America has the same art prerogative as all other lands, primitive or civilised; namely, that her art should be her own, achieved through the fullness of the meagreness of her own progress or failure, as inevitably related to her own conditions as an individual perfume is to its flower....A man must paint best what he feels and knows and understands best, and if he paints the life that he thrills in answer to, he puts upon canvas conditions that have developed him into the racial type he is, and in the doing he expresses his own point of view about the conditions...The art that is worth recognizing as a phase of national life is as insular as the type of the people, as the language as the ways of life; it shows equally the conditions of city and country.[24]

Fanton declared that the Eight exhibition was representative of the best that America had yet achieved in painting: "their work shows the widest range of interest in subject and inspiration, that rare technique which is not a personal idiosyncrasy but a development of art that expresses varying inspiration, and also that simplicity which one has grown to look for among the men who are not afraid to put into their work the big, vital, simple conditions and experiences of

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[22] Giles Edgerton, "The Younger American Painters: Are they Creating a National Art" " Craftsman, 512 - 532
[23] Ibid., 512
[24] Ibid., 512, 521

life."[25] According to her, the group did not have a distinct theoretical framework except that they all painted the truth in what they saw, and did so with strength and fearlessness in individuality. Fanton posited that these artists were not painting art that was purely patriotic, limited to American subjects and were not forbidden to acquire knowledge in Europe. Rather she quoted Robert Henri's views on how American artists should develop an art that spoke for the American public:

> although our artists must be individual, they must also be students, men who think a great deal about life, who read, study, men of the widest possible attainment, and who are constantly engaged in finding the special means of expression best suited to the thing they have to say...Art must always deal with *life,* and it becomes important as the ideas of the artists are significant. Art to everyman must be his personal confession of life as he feels it and knows it. The lack of human quality which makes for permanence... And so it seems that the basis of future American art lies in our artists appreciation of the value of the human quality all about them which is nothing more or less than seeing the truth, and then expressing it according to their individual understanding of it.[26]

Finally, Fanton inserted photographs in her essay of each artist who exhibited in the 1908 Macbeth Gallery and illustrated the article with some of the works displayed in the show.[27]

The official sentiment regarding the Eight's exhibition at the Macbeth Gallery was more positive than negative. Most art critics, like Fanton, came out in favour of the men, with James B. Townsend of American Art News, going so far as to warn "that the 'Eight' have among them strong painters cannot be denied, and the impulse and impression their first show may have upon present art conditions who can say?"[28] There were a few, however, who saw the Eight's work as crude, and were hostile towards the Macbeth exhibition. For instance a review in Town Topics stated:

> Vulgarity smites one in the face at this exhibition, and I defy you to find anyone in a healthy frame of mind who, for instance, wants to hang Luk's posteriors of pigs, or

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[25] Ibid., 522
[26] Ibid., 524, 531
[27] The works include the following: *Hudson River in Winter*, 1905 by Ernest R. Lawson; *The Promenade*, 1903 by Maurice B. Prendergast; *A March Day on Washington Square*, 1907 by William J. Glackens; *The Duet*,1906 by Everett Shinn; *Sixth Avenue and Thirtieth Street* 1906 by John Sloan; *Feeding Pigs*, 1906 by George B. Luks; *Portrait of a Girl*, 1904 by Robert Henri; *Autumn, Flame and Passion*,1905 by Arthur B. Davies.
[28] James B. Townsend, "The Eigth's Exhibition," American Art News, Vol. 26 (November, 1908): 18

> Glackens' *At Mouquin's* of John Sloan's *Hairdresser's Window* in his living room or gallery, and not get disgusted two days later....As for Pendergast, his work is unadulterated artistic slop, and Shinn's is only several degrees better.... Arthur B. Davies is only a slight different plane, that place which leaves you in doubt between genius and insanity....[29]

In continuing to express the need for a national art in America, in the following issue of Craftsman Mary Fanton Roberts published "Bronze Sculpture in America: Its Value to the Art History of the Nation,"[30] announcing how it had acquired American national characteristics. Two years prior to this essay, in 1906, the Metropolitan Museum of Fine arts had purchased a collection of modern American bronze sculpture, explaining in their bulletin the reasons for their new acquisitions:

> Much sculpture in bronze has been produced in this country, of historic interest as well as of artistic value and, in our judgement, this fact might well be recognized within reasonable limits....It is suggested therefore, that the collection of modern works of sculpture be extended in this direction, and that a collection of bronzes be made which shall illustrate the modern development of this art, especially in the United States.[31]

In Fanton's essay, she begins by repeating that American art up until that point had been importing all the styles, and techniques from Europe because "we had not, as a matter of fact, been entitled to a distinctive national art because we had not yet actually a distinctive national flavour. For an art to be truly national must spring from the irresistible desire of the artist to depict conditions about him which overwhelm him with their truth, and understanding, a comradeship no alien could experience."[32] She then announced that:

> Now at last America is no longer wholly at the mercy of every new or old imported art impulse. We are learning to do the modifying ourselves; and are adapting and absorbing foreign conditions for our own digestion... It is doubly to the credit of the younger American artists that through the miasma of dullness, egotism and superstition which has surrounded art growth in this country, at last there has sprung into existence a vital, significant home-made art – an expression of truth and beauty that could only be the

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[29] "Brooklyn Revives Memories of 'The Eight'" Art Digest, 18 (December 1, 1943): 12
[30] Giles Edgerton, "Bronze Sculpture in America: Its Value to the Art History of the Nation" Craftsman, 615 – 630
[31] Daniel Chester French, "Modern American Bronzes", The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin, vol.1, no. 10 (September 1906):128
[32] Ibid., 616

> product of an American art impulse because presenting with frankness, honesty and force the conditions which in combination are alone characteristics of this nation.[33]

Fanton congratulated the American artists who created the bronze sculptures in the Metropolitan Museum collection because, "incidentally there is no bronze sculpture of this century so forceful, vivid, so interesting in conception and individual in craftsmanship as the achievements of our own sculptors, whose work is instinct with the characteristic of the civilisation of their own land."[34] The Americans she praised and illustrated in her essay included Carl Haag, Frederick Remington, H. A, Macneil, Albert Humphriss, Gutzon Borglum and Daniel Chester French.[35] She did not go into any specific detail about one sculptor or work, but briefly highlighted all of them:

> Already in America....bronze sculpture has attained a spontaneity and unconscious truthfulness that renders it a significant phase of American art, not afraid to bear the national label....It is a human art that thrills and stirs, the art that finds a dancing street child as fruitful a subject as the heroine of a Greek poem, and a foolish, grubby, trumbling bear cub as full of inspiration as the horses of Hercules. It is this impulse which started Frederic Remington west to model Indians and cowboys, and which impels Edith Woodman Burroughs to hasten to her studio to model the old woman she has just passed around the corner; which forced Solon Borglum away from the *Beaux-Arts* back to the prairies; which enters into the figures of Abastenia Eberle when she models the little girls of the slums whirling in a fine ecstasy to tinkling hand-organ tunes; which Carl Haag, although a Swede, expresses in his miners and immigrants and in his 'Universal Motherhood,' modeled from a man's memory of his great and good peasant mother...[36]

In the next article, found in volume 14, "America Scores a Triumph at the International Exhibition of Painting in Pittsburgh,"[37] Mary Fanton Roberts declared the dissolution of internationalist aesthetics in American art. After nearly a quarter of a century of imitation of

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[33] Ibid., 616 - 617
[34] Ibid., 617
[35] The following is the list of works illustrated in Fanton's essay: *Universal Motherhood* by Carl Haag; *The Mountain Climber* and *The Bronco Buster* by Frederick Remington; *The Primitive Chant* by H.A. Macneil; *The signal* by Albert Humphriss; *Pursued* by Gutzon Borglum; *Bronze Door of Boston Public Library* by Daniel Chester French; *Roy and Heron* by Frederick Macmonnies; *Indian Warrior* by A.P. Proctor; *The Great God Pan* by George Gray Barnard; *Prairie Courtship* by E. E. Deming; *Panther* by Anna Vaughn Hyatt; *Dancing Girls* by Abastenia Eberle; *Surprised* by Eli Harvey; *The Auk Mother* by Louis Potter; *Portrait Bust of Richard Hovey* by Roland H. Perry. Fanton did not include any dates for these sculptures.
[36] Ibid., 617-618
[37] Giles Edgerton, "America Scores a Triumph at the International Exhibition of Painting in Pittsburgh" Craftsman, 463 – 476

international trends and practices, Fanton believed that art in the United States had finally begun to acquire its own indigenous characteristics. In her opening statement, she asserted that: "We dare to proclaim a man an artist even if he has never crossed the Atlantic or studied at [the Academie] Julien nor starved in the Latin Quarter. Our artists have come to study American conditions and scenery and have recklessly proclaimed them picturesque." Fanton continued: "It is not unnatural that Europe should resent a little the fact that America has ceased, or is beginning to cease, her ardent occupation of copying the works of their great men."[38] As with the previous essays, Fanton explained the necessity for artists to discover the spirit of their own country for artistic inspiration. She suggested that an international exhibition such as that in Pittsburgh was a good place to view other cultures because it created opportunities to establish standards and to contrast art conditions of different countries:

> An exhibition of painting is not important so much for the display of any definite number of technically excellent or sentimentally interesting pictures, but for certain tendencies shown, of growth suggested, or the relation of the quality of an art to its own nation or to other nations. In other words, the value to us here in America of a big international picture show lies largely in the opportunity it gives us to classify the various modern schools of painting and to catalogue them for our own understanding and enjoyment. For to thinking people a painting is not merely a source of pleasure; it is rather a means of wider culture, an opportunity to establish standards and a chance to contrast art conditions of different lands and thus better to form a cultivated critical judgement towards our own progress.[39]

She argued that acquiring an international opinion on art helped individuals form a critical judgment about America's own artistic progress. This essay was different from her article written a year and a half earlier titled "Is America Selling her Birthright in Art for a mess of Potage? Significance of this Year's Exhibition at the Pennsylvania Academy"[40] because instead of criticizing the artists, Fanton congratulated painters like Lillian 'M. Genth (1876-1953) and Thomas W. Dewing (1851-1938) who no longer needed to wait for foreign approval, but instead had embraced American conditions in their art. More precisely, she believed that

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[38] Ibid., 463
[39] Ibid.
[40] Giles Edgerton, "Is America Selling her Birthright in Art for a Mess of Potage?," Craftsman, 657 – 670

these personal searches for indigenous art had made them finally understand the country's personality and temperament:

> But now that we have discovered our own personality and decided – some of us – to express our national temperament in the works of our imagination, we are no longer candidates for a few kind words and a pat on the head. We have to be considered seriously and criticism must be awarded us according to our merits. For a while, at least this stand will not meet with approval – it will seem self-assertive and self-conscious – but in the long run we will take our place in the foreign galleries, and the indications are at present that it will be a very high place.[41]

Once again when she singled out the best works in the exhibition and the artists that had managed to transcend European influences Robert Henri, John Sloan and William Glackens are mentioned: "So much of this praise belongs to our younger men that a word to that effect is due them. Men like Lawson, Glackens, Sloan, Henri, Lathrop, Metcalf, have done such yeoman service in discovering America as a beautiful and profitable 'subject' that their radicalism has done much necessary leavening of academic art in this country."[42] Despite her enthusiasm for the artists, Fanton did not describe or discuss any of the artworks on display during this exhibition.

Fanton was not the only art critic to praise the exhibition for its international comparisons. Elizabeth Luther Carey (1867-1936), critic for the New York Times, believed that by comparing the works between foreigners and American artists, the latter proved more authentic and overall showed greater promise:

> The Carnegie Institute twelfth annual exhibition of oil paintings...derives its chief interest through the fact that it is international – that it displays not only the works of American but foreign artists....With a few notable exceptions, the foreign works included in this exhibition do not lend distinction through intrinsic merit; in fact, if anything, they lower the standard of the display and give credence to the belief that the chief hope for art on this side of the see. Taken as a whole, the works issuing from the foreign studios is not technically bad, but inherently spiritless: clever, perhaps, but showing neither inspiration nor enthusiasm, so that passing from picture to picture the thoughtful observer is bound to query: What moves these men and women to paint at all

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[41] Ibid., 465

[42] Ibid., 470. Interestingly enough, Fanton does not include the titles of the works that Robert Henri and the Eight displayed during this exhibition, and she does not use their works to illustrate the article. Instead the works she displays in the article are *Industrial Center – Snow Covered Roofs* by Albert Baertsoen and *The Grand Canal – Moonlight* by Henri Eugene Le Sidaner, which won the silver medal award in the competition

> since, apparently, they have no message and manifest no love of their work? The English pictures for the most part are over-painted; the French trifling and superficial; the German heavy and inartistic; the Belgian dull and the Italian and Spanish forced. This does not mean of course, that there are no exceptions, nor is it intended to suggest by inference that the works of the American painters are faultless or invariably superior. Our native artists are equally open to the charge of experimenting, and their paintings, to a great extent, are also found lacking in maturity. But there is freshness in their work, a healthy vigour, a feeling for art and an evident inclination to interpret something to them worthwhile, which engenders confidence and carry conviction. An ability merely to portray accurately is not art, nor is superficial cleverness of enduring interest.[43]

In Mary Fanton Roberts' next essay concerned with the creation of an American art, "Pioneers in Modern American Art: A Group of Men whose Influence has Greatly Aided its Development,"[44] published in September 1908, she congratulated seven older American artists. Gutzon Borglum (1867-1941), Childe Hassam (1859-1935), John H. Twatchman(1853-1902), Irving Wiles (1861-1948), Daniel Chester French (1850-1931), Karl Bitter (1867-1915) and J. Alden Weir (1852-1919), were praised not for making art that depicted the conditions of their country, but for creating art that was personal to them. For instance, when describing John W. Twachtman, Fanton confirmed:

> To many of our artists here in America, our critics, our laymen, John W. Twachtman ranks as the greatest of our landscape painters. Certainly as a dreamer of mysteriously beautiful dreams, as a lover of nature in every spiritual mood, as a painter of fine, grey thoughts, of fleeting memories, of atmospheric conditions that carry to the observer tenderness or sadness, and all those very subtle joys and sorrows that nature brings or withholds as a man is poet or plodder. Twachtman is without peers in America. He was one from whom artists young and old sought inspiration as well as knowledge.[45]

In this way, Fanton felt that these mature artists had helped to build up the foundations of American art for the artists of the 20th century. She affirmed that: "Although the seven men presented in this group of artists in no way form a school of art, nor are they related in any technical expression, they nevertheless are so significant, as representing a particular period of

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[43] "Native Artists Lead in Carnegie Exhibit" New York Times, 3 May 1908. Elizabeth Luther Cary worked as the New York Times art critic for 28 years. Her conscientious reviews of gallery and museum exhibition over the years struck a consistent note of open-minded, genuine interest through the turmoil of early 20th-century art.

[44] Giles Edgerton, "Pioneers in Modern American Art" Craftsman, 597 - 606

[45] Ibid., 605. The work that Fanton used to illustrate her article is John W. Twachtman's 1895 *Artist's home in Autumn*

our art development, that it seems natural that they should be presented in one article as being more or less pioneers at a time when their work was of widest significance to the nation."[46] she confirmed that slowly American art was becoming a subject of conversation in Europe, due in part to these older Americans:

> American art has become a legitimate subject of conversation in Paris and Munich, and even in New York and Boston. Having secured recognition, it has begun to awaken curiosity. The most practical among us have commenced to say: 'It could not, of course, have become good all at once; crude yesterday, and technically interesting this morning; futile and imitative last spring, but vital and individual this fall.' And thinking thus, it is natural that our interest should be stirred towards the men of power, of patience, of courage, who for some decades past have been setting the example of good painting in this country – men of culture, and critical judgment developed by wide travel and study; men with vast confidence in the art possibilities in America.[47]

Fanton believed that these men were trying to create an art individually their own, and were not concerned with created a national American art:

> But evidently fame was not the question with them, nor the greatness of American art, nor any definite self-conscious motive. Their own best development was what they were aiming for in the first place, and in the second place the most convincing expression of that development in their art. It was their relation to the progress of this art that they considered, not to be despised however in the progress of a country, for the more national and, in a way, insular, art becomes, the more historical and definitively valuable it proves to a nation. This however is wholly a different story, and one that has often been told in THE CRAFTSMAN.[48]

These older artists were not painting the conditions of American life, like some of the younger artists of that period. However, even though they lived and worked in European cities like Florence, Munich or Paris, their purpose was to paint the best way possible, "These older men have painted or modeled as the desire came, in Florence, or New Hampshire, in Munich or Boston, seeking only to reach the, to them, supreme goal in art, their own highest standpoint of perfection."[49] In that manner, Fanton believed they were the pioneers who helped the younger generation, such as the Eight, develop an art that truly represented America.

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[46] Ibid., 606
[47] Ibid., 597
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid., 598

Fanton's use of Craftsman as a means to address the function and purpose of the Academy of Design, as well as to endorse the Eight's oppositional exhibition at the Macbeth Gallery, reached its peak in volume 15 of the journal. Fanton seemed to have specifically used this volume to question the role of the Academy of Design as the institution which advanced national art in America, by incorporating a variety of articles by different authors whose intentions were to define American nationalism, and to criticize the Academy for its lack of interest in American art. Among these essays was Fanton's own article reviewing the Academy's annual exhibition in the winter of 1908-1909 and entitled "What Does the National Academy of Design Stand For?"[50] In this essay, Fanton recognized the vast potential of the Academy to encourage and express the vitality of American art, but criticized its current policies of entropy, insularity, and mediocrity. In consequence, Fanton argued that one must look to the one-person or small group exhibitions for evidence of individuality of artists in the United States. Fanton's first paragraph stated: "Is the Academy to be regarded as an ever changing, advancing expression of the living art of America? Or must we accept this famous institution merely as the art opinion of the academic few who invariably see originality coupled with anarchy, and who reticently offer the public year after year a programme of cold-served repetition..."[51] In other words, she questioned the role of the Academy as the primary institution exhibiting the growth and progression of American art and artists. In her opinion, because the Academy could not accept a genuine American art expression that stemmed from the roots of its own nation's soil, it "feel[s] that any actual vigorous pulsating growth in art is something to be a little nervous about, and which on the whole is rather safer to reject than hang."[52] Fanton believed that artists should express who they were and what they felt as artists in their own nation, even if the outcome lacked subtlety or finesse. Doing so was a necessity

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[50] Giles Edgerton, "What does the National Academy of Design Stand For: Has it at present a Value to the American Art Public" Craftsman, 521- 532.
[51] Ibid., 520
[52] Ibid.

because it enabled the nation to grow and allowed artistic standards to develop and improve so that art would become "more intimate to us, and more bone of our bone."[53] She determined that the exhibitions revealing these values were not found at the Academy but instead in the small solo venues found in private galleries, such as the Macbeth exhibition that displayed works by the Eight:

> [There are artists] who are honestly seeking truth and the kind of beauty which is only revealed by truth, and who desire the most intimate relation between our life and our art. There are enough of these who would like to see the Academy a vital asset in the development of the nation, who would like to see a new kind of exhibit and even new exhibition buildings. It would be interesting to see an exhibition of three hundred and thirty-eight pictures, with Glackens, Henri and Shinn on the hanging committee. Macbeth experimented in this fashion last winter when he opened his galleries to 'The Eight' and couldn't find standing room for the crowds. So it would seen that the public is not averse to strong, vivid, fresh work; the real difficulty is that is has seen to little of such work, and has not as yet thought much about it.[54]

She criticized the Academy's spring exhibition for using the exhibition space for non-significant painting. Instead Fanton believed the space could have nicely held:

> A well planned group of the work of 'The Eight;' yet it is said that three of George Luks' pictures, brilliant, stirring, real, were rejected [by the Academy], and not a Sloan, Henri, Shinn, or Prendergast are to be found in the walls, not even in the eaves, where they occasionally find a modest resting place. There is one Glackens, where it would be to the credit of American art to hang a dozen; one Lawson, and a brilliant storm scene by Jonas Lie, not that Lie is one of the Eight, but he paints so sincerely and so vitally that one naturally classes him in the same group.[55]

Thus, Fanton asserted that the Academy only wanted to hang the works they deemed the most popular and not those that were necessarily the most artistically interesting. She asked the Academy to promote artists who "are honestly seeking truth and the kind of beauty which is only revealed by truth, and who desire the most intimate relation between life and our art,"[56] and declared if they did so, the general public would be more interested in visiting their annual exhibitions.

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[53] Ibid., 521
[54] Ibid., 530-531
[55] Ibid., 522
[56] Ibid., 530

The final article for the Craftsman featuring Mary Fanton Roberts' ideas on nationalism is entitled "American Painters of Outdoors: Their Rank and Their Success,"[57] and repeated many of the arguments in her previous articles on American art. To summarize, she stated that modern civilisation had become ultra-cultured and had embraced superficiality in its appreciation of art: "the extremely cultured, dilettante community has more often than not so overburdened the receptive capacity of the brain that the pressure kills all creative quality, leaving instead appreciation and a desire to imitate or to possess."[58] In her opinion, if American artists did not create their works within an already understood context such as a traditional European style, the art community would be unwilling to accept it as good art: "We like only what we are familiar with, the thing neatly labelled and bearing the union stamp of unthinkable approval. When we are not insulted by a new creative spirit, we are frightened by it."[59] In other words, Americans felt safer when they recognized the labels of the already established European artist. Part of the problem, in her opinion, was that in America nobody wants to invest in the American artist:

> The marvel is that we have any artist, that any imagination has outlived the dullness, impertinence, non-understanding of our artificial, imitative, superficial cultivated public. We have laughed at our men of genius, those whom we have not previously destroyed so far as possible in Europe. We have doubted the sincerity of the greatest of them, we have supported fake foreign art while our own men have all but starved, and we have babbled the while about the paucity of our art conditions. That out artists have survived, that out art has grown in spite of the most impossible conditions ever established by a nation for the breeding of beauty is a magnificent tribute to the purpose and force of out native genius.[60]

Effectively, Fanton cried out to people who were cultured and had already-established artistic taste to reassess their knowledge of art and make room for the appreciation of "fresh ideas, original achievements, for the actual beauty of our own land, presented by the men who know

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[57] Giles Edgerton, "American Painters of Outdoors: Their Rank and Their Success" Craftsman, 275-282
[58] Ibid., 275
[59] Ibid., 276
[60] Ibid., 281

it best, the American artist."[61] Fanton listed some of the artists whom she believed epitomized American art, however, she did not cite any of their artwork: "there is not only great achievements in the work of such men as Twatchtman, Weir, Tryon, Metcalf, Lathrop, Hassam, Murphy, Glackens, Lawson, Shinn, but there is also the invincible courage which belongs only to people of imagination, sensitive, alive to all beauty and all suffering."[62]

Robert Henri and his Art Writings in The Craftsman

Given Fanton's support, it is hardly surprising that Robert Henri used Craftsman as a platform to publish three important essays on art and art exhibitions in America. As will be seen, while Henri and Fanton beliefs about the inadequacies of the Academy of Design's practices were similar, his three published essays also aimed at instructing artists on how to gain the knowledge and experience to paint artworks that were free of any type of constraints, whether social, religious or academic. Indeed Fanton not only allowed Robert Henri to print his manifesto calling for freedom of expression in art in 1908, but also permitted him to use the journal to explain the Independent exhibition of 1910 and to write an essay in 1915 detailing more in depth his ideas on art. A brief analysis of his first two articles demonstrate how closely they related to Fanton ideas on American nationalism in art.[63]

In the first essay titled "Progress in Our National Art Must Spring from the Development of Individuality of Expression: A Suggestion for a New School,"[64] Henri's focused was on the American artist's personal and artistic development in regards to their own country. Interestingly, Fanton article "What Does the National Academy of Design Stand For?"

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[61] Ibid., 281
[62] Ibid., 282
[63] Robert Henri's article titled , "My People", Craftsman vol.27 (March1915): 459-469 will not be analyzed since it did not discuss issues of national identity in art. However, it is important to note that this essay was also published in Robert Henri's The Art Spirit (Philadelphia and New York: J.B. Lippinott Company, 1951): 107 - 116
[64] Robert Henri, "Progress in Our National Art Must Spring From the Development of Individuality of Expression: A suggestion for a New School" Craftsman, vol.15 (January 1909): 387 - 401. This essay was also published in Robert Henri's The Art Spirit (Philadelphia and New York: J.B. Lippinott Company, 1951): 101-107

was, in part a response to this essay, and so many arguments are analogous. In his article, Robert Henri called for the development of national art outside the confines of the Academy, an institution he argued that stifled individuality and freedom of artistic expression. Robert Henri believed that creating an American art was not simply about style and technique, but about an artist discovering his attitudes towards life through his own personal temperament:

> A national art is not limited to a question of subject or technique, but is a real understanding of the fundamental conditions personal to a country, and then the relation of the individual to these conditions.... Take any American and develop his heart, mind and soul through the right work and the right study, and let him find through his training the utmost freedom of expression, a fluid technique which will respond to every inspiration and enthusiasm which thrills him, and without question his art will be characteristically American, whatever the subject.[65]

By doing this, an artist would no longer need to imitate foreign aesthetics, and would be able to communicate the true ideals of his own country. Henri condemned art schools in America for their lack of developing 'inventors,' and criticized the Academy for producing artists who strove to imitate the style and technique of Europe. He argued that this lack of personal development did not prepare the student to face life or to express the great ideas of the world, which in the end, hindered the development of a national art.[66]

In May 1910, Mary Fanton Roberts published an article by Robert Henri, "The New York Exhibition of Independent Artists,"[67] which presented the goals of the Society of Independent Artists, a newfound organization led by Henri's former students and colleagues, including which included William Glackens, John Sloan, George Bellows, and Everett Shinn. This exhibition was also the ultimate precursor to the Armory Show of 1913 and another affront against the Academy of Design annual exhibitions.[68] The first paragraph of Henri's essay proclaimed that:

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[65] Ibid., 387
[66] Ibid. 393
[67] Robert Henri, "The New York Exhibition of Independent Artists" Craftsman, vol.18 (May 1910):160-172
[68] The Independent Exhibition was deliberately scheduled for three weeks in April, so that it would overlap the Academy's spring annual, and cause a comparison between the two.

> The exhibition of Independent Artists is not a movement headed by any one man or small group of men. I think that one of the most damaging things that could happen to the progress of art in America would be to personalize this movement in any way. Neither is it an exhibition of the rejected, not an exhibition for people who have had their pictures accepted or refused by the Academy. It is not a gathering together of kickers of any description, but is an expression of the present tendency in America towards developing individuality...This exhibition is practically an opportunity for individuality, and opportunity for experimenters.[69]

Through this text, Henri reiterated how American artists must learn to express themselves in their on time and own world, "As I see it, there is only one reason for the development of art in America, and that is that the people of America learn the means of expressing themselves in their own time and in their own land...What we do need is art that expressed the spirit of the people of today. What we want is to meet young people who are expressing the spirit and listen to what they have to tell us."[70] The Independent Exhibition was the perfect venue for artists, because it allowed them the

> Freedom to think and to show what you are thinking about...Freedom to study and experiment and to present the results of such essays, not in any way being retarded by the standards which are the fashion of the time, and not to be exempted from public view because of such individuality or strangeness in the manner of expression....This is called an independent exhibition because it is a manifestation of independence in art and of the absolute necessity of such independence. It does not mean that [the exhibition] is an independent organization, but that is it made up of the independent points of view of men who are inventing. What such an exhibition should show is the work of those who are pushing <u>forward</u>, who need and deserve recognition, who must have encouragement, who should receive praise for every step of their advance. They deserve it because they are thinking. The world should stand and watch their progress, not to criticize, but to be criticized by these essays.[71]

To emphasize the importance of this exhibition, Fanton wrote a small editor's note in the same issue specifying the number of visitors who came to see the show:

> In connection with Mr. Robert Henri's article on the "Exhibition of Independent Artists" published in this issue of THE CRAFTSMAN, it is interesting to make note of the extraordinary reception accorded the opening of the exhibition....Over two thousand people attended the reception and nearly as many more were turned away

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[69] Ibid, 160. Unlike the National Academy there was no jury at the Independent Exhibition; the hanging committee displayed the works in alphabetical order. The arrangements emphasized the democratic nature of the show. Another innovation was the discontinuance of prize giving, Of the more than six hundred works of art finally displayed no honourable mention or prize,

[70] Ibid., 161

[71] Ibid., 160-161

> after the galleries were crowded to the limit of their capacity. A waiting line extended nearly to the end of the block each side of the entrance, and finally police assistance was found necessary to avert a possible panic. Up to the date of going to press the interest in this purely American exhibition of painting, sculpture and drawing has not abated.[72]

Other Authors Who Wrote About National Identity in the Fine Arts in The Craftsman: A Brief Analysis

The question of nationalism in American art was not only one that Fanton and the Eight discussed in Craftsman; many other essayists debated the need to develop a distinctive American art between 1907 and 1913. This section will analyze two articles on American identity in art by other authors to see how similar their opinions were compared with those written by Mary Fanton Roberts, and to establish further how important the issue was to the journal.

In volume 15, where Fanton published her article "What does the National Academy Stand for?" and where Robert Henri published his manifesto "Progress in Our National Art Must Spring From the Development of Individuality of Expression: A suggestion for a New School," other authors wrote articles expressing their displeasure at the conditions of art in America and the Academy of Design. Gutzon Borglum (1867-1941), a well-known American sculptor who created the monumental presidential portrait heads at Mount Rushmore, and who was a friend of both Fanton and Robert Henri wrote "Individuality, Sincerity and Reverence in American Art,"[73] which discussed the state of art, sculpture and architecture in America. Like Henri, he posited that American art, sculpture and architecture relied too much on old European styles that did not express American individuality. In Borglum's opinion the reason

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[72] Mary Fanton Roberts, "Editor's note", Craftsman, vol.18 (May 1910):291-292

[73] Gutzon Borglum, "Individuality, Sincerity and Reverence in American Art" Craftsman, vol.15 (October 1908): 3-6. Gutzon Borglum wrote a letter thanking Mary Fanton Robert and Gustav Stickley for allowing him to write this article. The note dates 22 September 1908 an reads: "My Dear Mrs, Roberts: - The copies of the 'Craftsman' were received and your note and the Rodin book have just come. I am glad Mr. Stickley liked the article. Please tell him that I wrote it because my interest in art is real and is not based on any financial consideration. I feel that the Craftsman occupies a unique place in relation to (art)workers and I am glad to have a chance to put before its readers things which I believe very earnestly." See MFRP/AAA, reel D162

for this, "is because, lacking in reverence, sincerity and individuality, the monuments we have built are not our own. Because our architects and artists annually 'beat it' to Europe to gather ideas to restock their idea-less plants at home. Because our finery is of the Old World."[74] He believed that by understanding the situation in America, artists, sculptors and architects could begin to change the situation and "regain some freedom, some spontaneity that is our natural heritage.... It is the only reason for this article, and it is the only reason for any resistance I have ever offered to the musty, pseudo-antique aestheticism that makes the atmosphere in this green land of ours all but intolerable."[75]

Borglum's fiery essay created a strong reaction among artists and critics of New York City: "In the current number of THE CRAFTSMAN, there is an article on "art in America" by Gutzon Borglum, the well-known sculptor, which has stirred up a veritable hornets nest among local artists. Already many opinions have appeared in print concerning it, the majority violently opposed the views held by Mr. Borlgum."[76] Indeed, artists like Henry Mosler (1841-1920), William Ordway Partridge (1861-1930) stated how dangerous Borglum's opinions were to American artists, and even Everett Shinn criticized them:

> I wonder whether Borglum thinks he has discovered something new.... Why shouldn't artists copy good things if they can't make anything better without copying? To support a builder we must make columns – how are we going to make them unless we make them the way the Greeks did? What other way is there of doing it? As for originality, he is original perhaps, in the sense that his brain goes back to nothing that is good in any kind of art the world has ever seen. Nothing he does is the least bit like anything that is good – it's all utterly mediocre."[77]

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[74] Ibid., 3
[75] Ibid., 5
[76] "Gutzon Borglum Statement that Our Art Lacks "Reverence, Sincerity, and Individuality" Calls forth protest from Artists", New York Times, 11 October 1908
[77] Ibid.

Two months after printing his article, and after the onslaught of negative criticism, Borglum wrote a rebuttal in Craftsman entitled "Aesthetic Activities in America: An Answer to His Critics,"[78] defending, once again, his opinions about art in America:

> Some of my critics are amazed that I could think such things as my article contained; more amazed that I could write or *would* write them if I did think them. Does not this very attitude betray insincerity? Any man who will carry his head erect for a day in New York, knows that I have only pointed at the truth, that a condition of rottenness exists here in nearly all matters of aesthetic activity which will not bear ventilating. Perhaps that is what they fear. The methods that obtain for the furthering and building of our memorials in this country are an open scandal. The importation, sale, and general business of supplying pseudo-European junk to meet our *parvenu* "taste" are a page of our life that will not bear reading. And dear critics, I have not the slightest wish to kick over any of these apple-carts, but I do think it is time to call halt. ....Our conditions are our own, and if our art is to be, it is time we took a step without the rotting crutch of antiquity. Every idea, every support to carry us on our way must come from the solitary labour of each single artist, from the "sweat and smart" of his own relation to the subject in hand. [79]

Some art critics, like James Gibbons Huneker of the New York Sun, defended Borglum's opinion by confirming that Borglum is:

> more concerned over the conditions of art in American, than in the production of American Art. [Borglum] finds us lacking in 'reverence, sincerity, and individuality; too much devoted to the machine-made in sculpture and architecture; too much given to slavish imitations of European Models....Mr. Borglum lays the stress on the right spot. We must fight ugliness and mediocrity, and let the originality take care of itself. Velasquez, Da Vinci, Rodin are artists who reverently went to nature and did not seek to evolve anything regional or national or original; being individual, their work is in consequence imbued with nationality or originality. However, we hardly think that 'originality is the bane of art' as one of Borglum's critics insists. It is not a quality to be despised, though it may not be easily wood; not are we a 'nation of mechanics,' as another critic insists....Art in America, not so much American art, should be the watchword, and without "reverence, sincerity and individuality" we can have no art at all.[80]

In March 1910, Mary Fanton Roberts ran an article by John W. Alexander (1856-1915), an academic artist and the newly elected president of the National Academy of Design.[81] Alexander's prime objective as president was the search for a new and adequate building for

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[78] Gutzon Borglum, "Aesthetic Activities in America: An Answer to His Critics" Craftsman, vol. 15 (December 1908): 301-307

[79] Ibid., 301

[80] "Mr. Borglum on American Art" New York Sun, 25 October 1908

[81] John Alexander was the president from 1909 - 1915

the Academy and its exhibitions. In his article entitled 'The Need of a National Academy: Its Value to the Growth of Art in America,"[82] Alexander announced that under his new guidance, many changes would take place at the Academy; his goal was to revitalize the declining institution and transform it into a genuinely national center for America.[83] He acknowledged that compared with the negligible conditions of art in America two decades earlier, when artists were driven abroad for artistic sustenance and training, "the great awakening wave of interest now sweeping over the United States in regards to art matters seems little short of miraculous."[84] He proclaimed that American artists no longer had to travel abroad to acquire training since American art institutions had improved a great deal and could offer the same training as found in Europe: "we have become genuinely convinced of the great educational value of the fine arts in their relation to the life of our people, and in every city and even in many of our smaller towns provision is made for exhibitions designed to foster the arts and encourage their conviction."[85] He argued that a National Academy should provide an institutional structure and legitimate forum for the development of American art since "all great movements' progress through civilisation through the aid of an institution." [86] Alexander bitterly criticized the lack of proper accommodations for the yearly exhibitions in New York and concluded that as a truly national organization like the Academy had the obligation to erect a building that could properly house what he called the Salon of America. Interestingly, but perhaps not surprisingly, Fanton undercut Alexander's message by illustrating his article with works by artists who had been adversarial to the system such as Robert Henri's *Girl with Parasol* of 1909, and John Sloan's *Foreign Girl* of 1905. Moreover, she also proclaimed in the editor's note that she had elected to reproduce paintings "of the pioneer spirit, possibly

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[82] John W. Alexander, "The Need of a National Academy: Its value to the Growth of Art in America" Craftsman, vol.17 (March1910): 607 - 618
[83] Ibid., 607
[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid, 608
[86] Ibid., 607

witnesses to revolutionary ideas which in the end may breed a new and interesting institution for its own preservation."[87]

Writing elsewhere, other critics also debated the importance of the National Academy of Design, and in particular the jury selection practises installed by the Academy. One example is provided by James Gibbons Huneker's 1912 Harper's Weekly article titled "What is the Matter with our National Academy? Two Spring Picture Shows Compared."[88] Highlighting Alexander's admirable and genuine intentions for the National Academy of Design to become to center of the New York art world, Huneker however disagreed with Alexander's claim that it was only a lack of adequate space that prohibited the Academy from playing a vital role in contemporary American art. He argued:

> As spokesman President Alexander has asserted, and not without reason, the exhibiting space is the principal evil to be overcome. He points to the Pittsburgh [Carnegie Institute], Washington [Corcoran Gallery] and Philadelphia Pennsylvania Academy exhibitions as confirming his argument. We need a building adequate in size for the Academy, he says, and there is no disputing the fact. But give the Academy its building, give it 2000 pictures to hang itself instead of 300, and will the result be different than what it is now – dispiriting mediocrity? Mr. Alexander believes it will be; many people believe the opposite.[89]

Interestingly enough, John W. Alexander failed to secure a site for a new building to house the exhibition galleries, which ultimately led him to resign his position as president on March 20th, 1915. It would be another twenty-five years before the National Academy of Design would find a permanent home.

The 1913 Armory Show: A Change in Perspective on Nationalism in American Art

As has been seen, Craftsman, under Mary Fanton Roberts' co-editorship and through her writing, was strongly implicated in major debates on the need for an 'American' art in the

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[87] Editor's note to John W. Alexander's article, "The need of a National Academy, and Its Value to the Growth of Art in America" Ibid., 618

[88] James Gibbons Huneker, "What is the Matter with our National Academy? Two Spring Picture Shows Compared," Harper's Weekly, vol. 56 (April 6th 1912):8

[89] Ibid.

early years of the century. New York City underwent an artistic transformation in 1913 with the advent of the International Exhibition of Modern Art, more commonly known as the Armory Show. The men responsible for the exhibition were Arthur B. Davies, Walt Kuhn (1877-1949), William J. Glackens, Jerome Myers (1867- 1940), George Bellows and John Sloan. With Arthur B. Davies acting as president of the organizing body, progressive art movements were, for the first time, at the forefront of a major exhibition in the city. More specifically, Davies was not only tired of Robert Henri's leadership of past exhibitions such as the Eight's exhibition at the Macbeth Gallery or the Independent Exhibition of 1910, but also his choice of works that were based on urban realism depicting American life. Davies' goal was to incorporate in the Amory Show more avant-garde works from Europe, like those by Pablo Picasso, Paul Cézanne and Henri Matisse. The exhibition, on view from February 15th to March 15th, contained nearly thirteen hundred works, with every avant-garde tendency in Europe and America on view, including Marcel Duchamps *Nude Descending a Staircase* of 1912, *Le Luxe* (1907-1908) by Henri Matisse and American artist Alfred H. Mauer's (1868-1932) *Autumn* (1906). It must be noted that nearly all the American works and most of the European works during the exhibition were fairly conventional, but the attention in the newspapers was given to the contributions of avant-garde Europeans such as Matisse, Rodin, Cezanne and Picasso. In essence, the Armory Show forced both the artist and art critic to reconsider the conflict between modern and traditional artistic styles. In many ways, the exhibition suggested that realism seemed outdated and many in the art community realized that avant-garde art could transform and change the mimetic representation of nature as an ultimate ideal.[90] Although critics and newspaper articles proclaimed that the Armory Show contributed to the demise of American realist painting and eroded Robert Henri's leadership in progressive art circles, this exhibition did not actually change trends overnight. In The Story of the Amory

[90] David B. Bearinger, Rave Reviews: American Art and Its Critics, 1826 – 1925,(University Press of New England, 2000): 123

Show,[91] Milton Brown explained: "The Armory Show had a profound effect on artists, collectors, and the art market," and it "set in motion forces which eventually transformed the character of American art."[92] However Brown admitted that "it would be inaccurate...to say that is was the most important factor in the development of modernism in the United States."[93] Nonetheless, even if New York City critics disagreed with some of the progressive art presented at the Armory Show, nearly all were unanimous in their statements that the American works were conventional when compared to the more avant-garde works done by the Europeans: "I am afraid that the American section of this exhibition will seem very tame beside the foreign section."[94]

Although Robert Henri and the members of the Eight experimented with a brilliant color palette to reinvigorate their representational painting, they clearly were conservative compared with the abstract compositions that the radical European artists were producing. Interestingly, for Henri and many of his students, art was a democratic medium, fostering artistic independence and individual freedom, something which was also at the very core of abstraction. Indeed, the new generation of artists who experience in abstraction upheld the same ideals as Henri, but expressed it in different pictorial techniques. Henri's frustration over the situation seemed obvious when one reads the bitter and satirical letter he wrote under a fictitious name to the Editor of the New York Evening Sun on 18 February 1913:

> I am surprised that my work should be overlooked by every N.Y. critic who has written a line about this ultra-modern Armory Show – my work – the work of the only Post–Futurist in the Show, has been overlooked - that my name is not included in the catalogue – not the title of my work – and that the work is not visible to the ordinary use of the eye is no excuse – Post-Futurism can use no such ordinary devices to obtain attention. My picture is one that should not be seen – it should be sensed. And your critic, if he be astride with Post-Futurism, should have sensed it and reported as best he could with what sensations he had.
> Regretfully yours,

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[91] Milton Brown, The Story of the Amory Show, (New York, Abbeville Press Publishers and the Joseph H. Hirshorn Foundation, 1988): 288
[92] Ibid., p. 239-240
[93] Ibid., 240.
[94] James Britton, "The Open Eye", American Art News, 8 March 1913: 3

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Mary Fanton Roberts was among the critics who discussed and even praised the exhibition. In her article "Science in Art, As Shown in the International Exhibition of Paintings and Sculpture"[96] she supported the Armory Show, calling it 'fearless' and 'inspired', and described the exhibition as "the most revolutionary art work the art world has ever seen."[97] She went so far as to prophesize that the event would bring a much wider liberation in all art matters and a much wider appreciation of what color could bring to people's daily lives.[98] However, unlike most other critics, Fanton included the Eight as part of the progressive movement and contrasted their work with those academic artworks that were also on display at the Armory Show. For instance, when singling out the artists who made an impression on her, she stated that, "perhaps we should speak of the men who were presented, the great men of the art world today – Cezanne, Matisse, Gauguin, Van Gogh, Picasso, Maris, Monet, Degas, Daumier, Manet, Puvis de Chavannes, Henri, Sloan, Glackens, Myers, Bellows, Brancusi, Lehmbruck, Bernard, men who surprise, men who horrify, men who stimulate and encourage."[99] The main topic of her essay however, focused on the use of color in the works presented in the show; Fanton was able to comment on the differences between the academicians' color palette compared with that of the Post-Impressionists, Fauves and members of the Eight. She was quick to point out how dull the color of academic art, and approved of the bright palettes employed by the more progressive artists, including Robert Henri and the Eight:

> And in reality deep in our souls we crave color as we crave anything that the natural world holds for us, and which is ours by the divine right of all Nature's gift. We vibrate to color as we do to music, as we do to dancing; that is, we do if we are willing. To

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[95] As cited in Jerome Mellquist, "The Armory Show 30 Years Later," Magazine of Art, XXXVI (December 1943): 298

[96] Mary Fanton Roberts, "Science in Art, As Shown in the International Exhibition of Paintings and Sculpture" Craftsman, vol. 24 (May 1913): 216-220

[97] Ibid., 217

[98] Ibid.

[99] Ibid., 218

> desire only pallor in tone is to undertake a criticism of Nature. We are really finding fault with Nature when we strike off the splendid tones from her palette. When we ignore yellow, and red and blue and green, we are taking to ourselves the privilege of making a better world than the one first devised for us....We can create fads and whims and passing fashions for the anaemic, but we never can turn our faces wholly and completely from the gift the rainbow has for us. And we will come back to it from generation to generation, as we are doing now in the paintings of the Modernists.[100]

However, as much as she approved of the intense color palette employed by many of the European avant-garde, she still remained quite conventional in her outlook about new and abstract art techniques. In fact, Fanton made sure that her point was clear when she stated that, "The Craftsman does not wish to say for a moment that it admires and stands for all the eccentricities of the International Exhibit, because we feel that many of the pictures, especially the Cubist drawings, were merely 'stunts,' interesting as such, absurd as pretending to present the human side of life."[101] Her opinion of the ultra-progressive works by the European clearly demonstrated that she still remained an advocate of the Eight's ideal of representation through nature. Finally, no painting displayed in the show was illustrated or discussed in her article.

After the 24th volume of Craftsman, or more specifically the issues following the article on the Armory show of 1913, there is rarely further discussion about American nationalism in art, and more importantly, Mary Fanton Roberts published no other articles discussing the problems of the Academy of Design, or the need for American artists to discover qualities of their own nation in their art. It would seem that Fanton recognized that with the Independent exhibition of 1910, and the Armory show of 1913, the Academy of Design's influence on the city's intellectual life was slowly fading, and was no longer the main organ dictating the tastes of the New York City art community, as it had in first decade of the 20th century. Artists were finally beginning to desire and develop an art form that was characteristically their own, without having to revert to or assimilate styles from European schools. Additionally and as will be seen in the next chapter, Mary Fanton Roberts major

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[100] Ibid., 217
[101] Ibid., 218

interests in the visual arts included topics other than simply questions of national identity in America.

Chapter III
Mary Fanton Roberts' Other Writings on Art in The Craftsman

Mary Fanton Roberts wrote on and published articles on other topics in Craftsman besides the problems related to the Academy of Design, nationalism in art and the artistic contributions of the Eight. Indeed, as will be seen, Fanton was also a proponent of art-photography, of developing standards for the assessment of the work of women artists and of an eclectic group of individual artists; she kept an open mind by writing about other artists and groups who exhibited together. In all her essays published in Craftsman, Fanton went out of her way to praise the artists she chose to discuss, with open and constructive ideas even when criticizing the artist or artwork. She always presented a biographical overview of the subject's life and looked for what was aesthetically pleasing in the artist's work. The following chapter will analyze her writings on different artists in order to further illuminate her own opinions on art.

Out of the fifteen articles written on photography in Craftsman during her tenure, Mary Fanton Roberts wrote five of them, four which presented the debate over photography as an artistic medium and one that focused on a Viennese photographer. These essays are: "Photography as an Emotional Art: A Study of the Work of Gertrude Kasëbier,"[1] "Photography as one of the Fine Arts: The Camera Pictures of Alvin Langdon Coburn, Vindication of This Statement,"[2] "The Lyric Quality of the Photo-Secession Art of George Seeley,"[3] "The Place of Photography Among the Arts: Its Progress as Revealed in the International Exhibition,"[4] and

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[1] Giles Edgerton, "Photography as an Emotional Art: A Study of the work of Gertrude Kasëbier," Craftsman, vol. 12 (April 1907): 80 - 93

[2] Giles Edgerton, "Photography as one of the Fine Arts: The Camera Pictures of Alvin Langdon Coburn A Vindication of this Statement," Craftsman, vol. 12 (July 1907): 394-403

[3] Giles Edgerton, "The Lyric Quality in the Photo-Secession Art of George Seeley," Craftsman, vol. 13 (December 1907): 298 - 303

[4] Giles Edgerton, "The Place of Photography Among the Arts: Its Progress as Revealed in the International Exhibition," Craftsman, vol.16 (April 1909): 32-44

'Imagination and the Camera: Illustrated from Photographs by Baron de Meyer."[5] More specifically, all of her essays introduced different artists who were working with pictorial photography. As will be seen, the first four essays focused on American photographers who were part of Alfred Stieglitz's Photo-Secession Movement, an American avant-garde group that exhibited works in the early 20th century. Its members constituted the first American movement to develop and manipulate photography and present it as a fine art.[6] The main theme in these essays was how these artists were able to break from traditions of the past that had viewed the idea that photography as a mechanical tool and not an artistic medium.

The first article on this subject in Craftsman is entitled, "Photography as an Emotional Art: A Study,"[7] and discussed the work of Gertrude Kasëbier (1853-934), a Photo-Secession artist most known as one of the pictorial photographers who elevated portrait photography to the status of fine art. By interviewing Kasëbier in her photo studio, Fanton created a biographical and interpretive essay, emphasizing the expressiveness of Kasëbier's photography especially her motherhood series, which include *The Manger* and *Blessed Art Thou Among Women,*[8] both dating 1899. She commented that: "Photography distinctly belongs to [Gertrude Kasëbier] because in every photograph which she takes, she is expressing her own temperament and life as it was reached her through her imagination and through her growing understanding of humanity. Creative art demands that the artist should know life, either by experience or by inspiration and this knowledge of life must develop a profound sympathy with humanity."[9] When describing her motherhood series, Kasëbier emphasized:

> To those having still in mind the old attitude toward photography, 'That the camera does it,' *The Manger* seems little short of a miracle. There is first of all a Corot quality of atmosphere, or light and shade through spaces of interior; and there is supreme

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[5] Giles Edgerton, "Imagination and the Camera: Illustrated from Photographs by Baron de Meyer" Craftsman, vol. 26 (August 1914): 517-523

[6] William Innes Homer, "Alfred Stieglitz and the Photo-Secession," (New York: Little, Brown & Company, 1983): 16-30

[7] Giles Edgerton, "Photography as an Emotional Art: A Study" Craftsman, vol. 12 (April 1907): 80 - 93

[8] Figure 9

[9] Ibid., 8

> management of composition and draperies, the effect of color and radiance, and withal the most exquisite tenderness and feeling, the most complete expression of maternity and motherhood.... The third of the series is called *Blessed Art Thou Among Women*. It is the photograph of a plainly clad, strongly alert little girl standing in a doorway, with a slender woman bending near and suggesting in gesture and pose the utmost reach of tender maternity, the affection that is of renunciation and self-control rather than demonstration. It is a picture of great beauty and peace achieved in a chance moment and a 'study in white' at a friend's home. The camera had touched upon a great spiritual moment, and Mrs. Kasëbier realized it in taking and printing the picture.[10]

Fanton ended her article by allowing Gertrude Kasëbier to describe her art and career in her own words: "It's not that I am anxious to make these photographs for the sake of people, I am thirsty to do it for my own sake, to express what there is in me. I want to see what life is doing to other people..... My development came slowly through much suffering, much disappointment and much renunciation. I have learned to know the world because of what the world has exacted of me."[11]

Interestingly enough, and indicative of the place of Craftsman in circles concerned specifically with photography, Charles H. Caffin (1854-1918), an American writer and art critic who was a major proponent of Stieglitz and his Photo-Secession '291' gallery, wrote an acerbic parody in Camera Notes on the article Mary Fanton Roberts' article.[12] In his essay entitled "Emotional Art (After Reading the 'Craftsman,' April 1907),"[13] Caffin ridiculed Kasëbier by transforming her interview with Fanton into a satire where a boastful photographer named Theodosius Binny laments the fate of the artist-photographer. Taking the comments that Kasëbier had made on the struggles of being an artist, Caffin mocked Kasëbier's opinion by having Mr. Binny burst out in a sob: "But it is out of the suffering of the body that the artist

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[10] Ibid., 91-92
[11] Ibid., 92
[12] Charles H. Caffin was aligned with Stieglitz and the '291' set. Caffin was a proponent of modernism who began his career in America working for the Evening Post. He was also an art editor for Harper's Weekly (1897-1901), International Studio (1901-1905), and then worked for the New York Sun until 1904. During his career, he also contributed to the two journals associated with Stieglitz, Camera Notes and Camera Work, and he was a present fixture in the Stieglitz gallery.
[13] Charles H. Caffin, "Emotional Art (After Reading the 'Craftsman,' April 1907," Camera Work, no.20 (October 1907): 32

reaches up to the emotionalism of his soul. It is only, when the whole fabric of his flesh collapses into a palpitating confusion of pain, that his spirit is disengaged and rises to sublimity. That is why we artists glory in our missions, cherish our weaknesses, and are in love with pain."[14] Throughout the article, Caffin's magnified Kasëbier's opinions in her interview with Fanton, and denounced her views as exaggerations. It must be stated that from 1906, a rift was slowly developing between Kasëbier and Stieglitz over Kasëbier's commercial attitude to photography.[15]Although she was creating pictorial photography with the Photo-Secessionists, she also had a commercial studio and in May 1906, she joined the Professional Photographers of New York. Because the commercial goals of the professional photographer's organization were at odds with the Photo-Secession aesthetic aims, Stieglitz saw her decision as an act of infidelity.[16] The conflicts between these two artists might be one of the reasons why Caffin was so harsh in his criticism of Kasëbier's interview with Fanton. By 1907 Kasëbier had fallen out of favour with Stieglitz, and in 1912 she resigned from the Photo-Secession.

Mary Fanton Roberts' next essay on photography once again defended the work of a Photo-Secession artist, one who was a leading figure in the struggle for photography's recognition as a fine art. The article was entitled "Photography as one of the Fine Arts: The Camera Pictures of Alvin Langdon Coburn, Vindication of this Statement,"[17] and described Coburn's (1882-1966) work on display in 1907 at the '291.' In the first part of the article, Fanton highlighted the controversy around photography as an art form:

> The claims of photography to a place among the fine arts have formed the subject-matter of frequent keen controversies between artist and photographer. The defenders of the claims of photography have stoutly contented that the whole spirit and meaning of art have been missed by the opponents of those claims when they have based their arguments upon the fact that the photographer must work through such a mechanical medium as the camera. Why not also deny the claim of music for the reason that, in its

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[14] Ibid., 32
[15] Barbara L. Michaels, Gertrude Kasëbier: The Photographer and her Photographs, (New York, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1992): 120
[16] Ibid.
[17]Edgerton, "Photography as on of the Fine Arts: The Camera Pictures of Alvin Langdon Coburn: Vindication of this Statement" Craftsman, 394-403

> highest form, it demands such mechanical means of expression as the highly complex and mechanical instrument? Why should the creative impulse and the quickened imagination be restrained from using *any* agency, any means of expression?[18]

As opposed to some critics in the art community who viewed photography as a mechanical process that only mimicked reality, Fanton believed that if used creatively, the camera could be a true artistic medium:

> The works of such leading exponents of the Photo-Secessionist movement as Gertrude Kasëbier, Clarence H. White, Alfred Stieglitz and Edward Steichen has been an all-sufficient answer to those who carped about the 'necessary limitations of purely mechanical process,' and a vindication of the claims of those who would place such work among the fine arts, along with music, painting and sculpture. These pioneers...set out to conquer the camera, to make it express spirit and feeling no less realistically than physical shapes. In a word, they believed it possible to so dominate the mechanical processes of photography as to produce pictures as truly artistic, as expressive of creative imagination and poetic inspiration, as painting or sculpture. They believed that no innate qualities to express emotion and insight into life belong to the materials with which artists have worked, but that they are inherent in the artists. Therefore, they argued, there is no reason why those qualities which constitute the soul of art should stop short, and, having conquered pen and ink, chalk, paint, brushes, marble wax, clay, bronze and a variety of other things, making them means of art-expression, refuse to admit the possibility of achieving a similar conquest over the camera and the dry plate and accessories. [19]

She praised the Photo-Secession Movement and specifically Alvin Langdon Coburn who was able to express the spirit and feelings of humanity in his photography. In the second part of the article, Fanton explained Coburn's artistic techniques: the type of processes he used, his different manipulations of lights and the use of accessories in his pictures. Furthermore, she illustrated this essay by printing four portraits studies by Coburn including a self portrait of the artist, and portraits of Alfred Stieglitz and Gertrude Kasëbier. She did not comment on any of these but instead ended the article by quoting Coburn, who felt that:

> it is [not] the aim of a work of graphic art to tell a story, but rather the express the feelings of the artist. If he has a story to tell, his thoughts should be expressed with a pen and not with a lens, or any of the clumsier methods of making pictures, such as painting or etching. But for the ensnaring and illusive visions of things, only half and hardly realized, fleeting things like the movement of smoke, the reflection in water, or

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[18] Ibid., 395
[19] Ibid., 395, 401

> the ever changing forms of clouds on a windy day, there is no other medium but photography responsive enough to give these things in their fullness.[20]

Mary Fanton Roberts was not the only art critic who believed in the work of Photo-Secession artists. Elizabeth Luther Cary of the New York Times wrote an article on the same exhibition, describing the evolution of art-photography:

> At first, wholly mechanical, exceedingly circumscribed and impersonal, photography has gradually become more and more individual, until today it verges close on being an altogether plastic medium of personal expression. Pictorial photography stands firm-rooted in the principle that the laws of artistic expression are unconditioned – that there is no virtue in the burin, the needle, the brush, or the pencil, which may not inhere in the lens used with a similar degree of skill and moved by a soul similarly fired with high ideality. As in all the arts, it was a few highly gifted and imaginative spirits who disclosed the possibilities of this latest medium....If photography is ever to attain a permanent place among the arts, it will be by virtue of its intrinsic merit, not by its success in counterfeiting the characteristics of some other art. In its course of development photography has not infrequently been misused, being made to simulate etchings, paintings, wash-drawings, and a variety of things that it was not in the mistaken belief that this was the real thing in artistic photography. So great was the demand for this so-called high-art photography that for a time some of the best photographers were drawn into this maelstrom of chariatanism that swallowed up many promising talent. Only a few succeeded in extricating themselves – commercial success engulfing the others. [21]

In volume 13, Fanton continued her quest to promote the Photo-Secession organization in "The Lyric Quality in the Photo-Secession Art of George H. Seeley."[22] Although Seeley (1880-1955) spent most of his life in his native western Massachusetts, making only a few excursions to New York, his career flourished in the center of the Photo-Secession activity. Interestingly, unlike most of his Photo-Secession colleagues, he was not particularly impressed by the movement, preferring to remain an independent figure with loose ties to it. However, he did enjoy the privilege of having his work shown in prominent exhibitions in the United States and abroad. In this way, he became a ranking figure in the American pictorialist movement, and his name was frequently linked with those of Stieglitz, Kasëbier and Coburn in writings

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[20] Ibid. 403
[21] "Photo-Secession Exhibition," New York Times, 8 September 1907
[22] Edgerton, "The Lyric Quality in the Photo-Secession Art of George H. Seeley," Craftsman, 298 - 303

about the Photo-Secession.[23] In her short essay, Fanton briefly introduced to her readers to this artist who, according to her, created photographs that embodied Photo-Secession art. Fanton began her essay by describing his technique:

> Mr. Seeley does not seem to have marked out sharply a line between his portrait and landscape work; but is forever combining the two in a way to relate both expression, to bring people in very close harmony with wild woods and meadow lands. It has always seemed that the more saturated with nature a man became, the more he brought people back to earth, the more he felt the tender relationship of human life with the sod and the trees. One does not learn this in an academic fashion, but the truth is borne in upon the worker as he grows in wisdom, the wisdom taught by sun and moon, by friendly shade and the fine fragrance of dew-fresh things.[24]

The rest of her essay provided a brief biographical account of his life and career. She illustrated the article with four photographs by Seeley, including an undated photograph entitled *Maiden with Bowl*[25] and 1906 *The Burning of Rome.*

In Mary Fanton Roberts next essay, titled "The Place of Photography among the Arts: Its Progress as Revealed in the International Exhibition,"[26] she commented on the works of the Photo-Secession Movement at the 1907 International Exhibition of Photography at the National Arts Club. J. Nilsen Laurvik (1876-1953), a color photographer and art critic who wrote for such magazines and Camera Work and Century Magazine, was the director of the international show. He and his associates assembled 255 works from Great Britain, Austria and Germany, France and North America, and from various periods in the careers of the sixty-six participating photographers, who included the English photographer David O. Hill (1802-1870), and the Viennese photographer Baron De Meyer (1868-1949). More specifically, because pictorial photography now was "accepted, reluctantly, as a medium of individual expression," Laurvik proposed "to show its evolution as illustrated by a series of representative prints by the leading exponents of the various schools in photography, both abroad and in this

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[23] William Innes Homer, Alfred Stieglitz and the Photo-Secession (Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1984): 132

[24] Ibid., 298- 303

[25] Figure 10

[26] Edgerton, "The Place of Photography Among the Arts: Its Progress as Revealed in the International Exhibition," Craftsman, 32-44

country."[27] According to Laurvik, pictorial photography now had its own history and evolution, however brief, and that it was now worth recording:

> This exhibition demonstrated for the first time in a comprehensive manner that pictorial photography is the one and only new contribution made to the art of the world by America, and furthermore that it is the only other art movement of modern times that can be compared in significance and importance with the Impressionist movement .... I would simply throw out the observation that the highest expression of the imaginative and inventive genius of our time, especially of the best creative minds of America, is the machine in all its beautiful simplicity and coordinate complexity – in it we find our sonnets, our epics, and therein lies expressed eloquently the true greatness of our age.[28]

Fanton viewed the exhibition in similar ways as Laurvik when she wrote her review Indeed, she brought an even more fervent national note to the article when she explained that modern photography had appeared in America twenty years earlier when Alfred Stieglitz and his colleagues came together to experiment with the camera for the purpose of creating art. She confirmed that the Photo-Secession Group was an American movement that sought to express the nation's purpose and growth, and was able to break it from its mechanical medium:

> During the exhibit one frequently heard the point of view expressed that not only had photography grown to be recognized as one of the arts but, because of the quality of its development, essentially an art closely and intimately related to American civilization – revealing as it does imagination, vividness, sincerity, audacity, the pioneer spirit an appreciation of science – all characteristics which seem native to the America of this century..... The proposition which we wish to make is solely that the big, intelligent vital work which has lifted photography into a new realm of action and at least out into the discussion of the arts, had its birth in America. The idea of "modern photography" first appeared in America some twenty five years ago, when Alfred Stieglitz and a few other workers got together to test their power over the camera. Seven years ago the work of these men and women crystallized into the Photo-Secession club, which is now recognized as possibly the most active organization for modern photography in existence....[29]

This movement liberated photography from the limitations set by the traditions of the older arts, and developed it into a medium that could be as fluent as a brush and canvas. Fanton

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[27] J. Nielsen Laurvik, "International Photography at the National Arts Club, New York," Camera Work, no.26 (April 1909): 38-39
[28] Ibid., 39
[29] Ibid., 32 -37

praised Alfred Stieglitz and the artists who came together in the Photo-Secession movement for their contributions to art in the New York City community:

> The purpose of the Photo-Secession Club and the American photographers has been rather to develop the 'art' along its own lines, not to make of it near-painting or near-etching, but just simply photography with every possibility of development which could be discovered by the help of sunlight, lens, and film. These modern American photographers are not working with the camera because they are poor painters or because they want to be painters, but because the thing they seek in life, the beauty they behold, they can best express through this particular medium; in fact, the medium to them seems the best possible means of expression they can find. No subject is too unusual, too subtle for their skill, no quality of atmosphere or temperament too elusive for them to seek to fix it permanently for the glory of photography.[30]

After explaining her opinions on photography in America, Fanton briefly listed some of the American Photo-Secession artists who participated in exhibition, specifically Edward Steichen (1879-1973), Alfred Stieglitz and Clarence White (1871-1925). The work of only four photographs are illustrated in the essay; an 1843 photo-portrait of John Ruskin by David O. Hill, an undated photograph titled *White Grapes* by Baron de Meyer, a 1906 photograph titled *Cadiz* by Alvin Langdon Coburn and finally an undated photo-portrait of Rudyard Kipling by Canadian photographer Sidney Carter (1880–1956). Fanton's reasoning behind the lack of more illustrations in her essay was because:

> Among those shown [in the exhibition], Gertrude Kasëbier "Robin," the "Heritage of Motherhood," and "The Red Man," have already appeared in THE CRAFTSMAN in an article about Mrs Kasëbier work, published in April, nineteen hundred and seven. Perhaps it is also well to mention here that an illustrated article about Mr. White's work in December, nineteen hundred and six, on Mr. Seeley's work in December, nineteen hundred and seven....The fact that articles on the work of these photographers have already been published and illustrated in THE CRAFTSMAN accounts in part for the reproduction of their work not appearing in the present article.

The final essay written by Mary Fanton Roberts that discussed photography came five years later and was entitled "Imagination and the Camera: Illustrated from Photographs by Baron de Meyer."[31] The main topic of discussion was photography as an art medium, one that transcended "art as imitation," and she superimposed her discussions about art-photography

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[30] Ibid., 37

[31] Roberts, "Imagination and the Camera: Illustrated from Photographs by Baron de Meyer" Craftsman, 517-523

with two illustrations by the well-known Viennese photographer Baron de Meyer. According to the essay, Craftsman was able to secure a group of Meyer's still-life pictures, which presented well Fanton's own ideas on art-photography. Fanton begins her essay by discussing how art must go beyond imitating nature:

> The more definitely and closely we strive to merely *imitate* Nature, the more closely we seek to follow the working of her deft fingers, the further away we are from the subtle ever-changing mystery of living beauty....Within the last very few years, the great men in every phase of art have reacted from the purely material imitation of Nature and have sought to create through their work the wonderful illusions that Nature herself creates, and which no technical imitation of her ever brings for a moment... "[32]

Fanton reiterated that in the past, photography was merely a convenient mechanical opportunity for securing a likeness of the subject represented.[33] However, artists slowly began to realize that photography could be more than mere imitation, and if employed properly, with the artist's creativity and desire for experimentation, it could be an art form closely in touch with nature since:

> A photograph today is no longer a map, a mere outline of related surfaces; it can carry for one the very spirit of the subject photographed. A landscape in a little photographic print can give you the delicacy of a misty, early morning, the rich warm beauty of midday, the pale haunting tang of twilight. The photographing of people is no less wonderful. The artist of the camera has achieved the power of photographing beyond the surface, of reproducing temperament, of even bringing through the lens qualities hidden from the eye of the ordinary onlooker.[34]

She equated these art-photographers with the painters who were also seeking to transcribe onto their canvas the beauty and joys they received from their surroundings. As might by now be anticipated, Fanton cited Robert Henri and William Glackens as examples of the type of artists who were able to create this sense of vital force, life and beauty in their art.[35] According to her, Baron de Meyer's photographs also had the same qualities that are necessary for art to be alive and original. She described his undated photo-study entitled *Poppies in the Meadowland*:[36]

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[32] Ibid., 518
[33] Ibid., 517
[34] Ibid., 518
[35] Ibid., 518
[36] Figure 11

"We feel that in these special studies this remarkable photographer is working along the same lines for results as are our painters and our musicians and out stage artists; that he is seeking the ineffable rather than the material and that somehow beyond our understanding, he has been enabled to meet the subtleties of Nature halfway, wooing them, charged with Nature's primitive force, through his camera out to the world."[37] Finally two other examples of Baron de Meyer's work were illustrated, a study called *Roses in June Sunlight*, and another titled *Tea in the Garden*, both undated.

As demonstrated, Mary Fanton Roberts had a special interest in photography as art, and more specifically the Photo-Secession movement. Although her opinions did not extend to this group's more radical artworks or to their avant-garde viewpoints as represented in Max Weber's cubist inspired works, her 'Art for Life Sake's' philosophy honed by the Eight allowed her to see positive and interesting aspects in their works.

Gender differences in art was another topic of interest to Mary Fanton Roberts in Craftsman. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the roles and expectations of the woman artist were being debated; larger numbers of women than ever before were trained in the new public art schools or abroad, and thousands of women were attempting to make a living as artists. Nonetheless, the idea of the woman artist was still uncomfortable and contested within art communities. More specifically, it was understood that art was a suitable accomplishment for the middle-class woman, but the serious pursuit of art was incompatible with the demands of marriage and domesticity. [38] As Lisa Tickner pointed out in The Spectacle of Women: Imagery of the Suffrage Campaign, 1907-1914:

> Women artists were caught in a paradox produced out of the clash between ideologies of femininity and of art; good-for-a-woman was all that a woman could be, but that in itself would never produce *good* art. Women artists, whether they were aware of it or not, were engaged in a struggle with the incompatible terms of their identity. They were

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[37]Ibid., 523.

[38] Lisa Tickner, The Spectacle of Women: Imagery of the Suffrage Campaign, 1907-1914, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988):13

> subject not only to the institutional discrimination they recognized and fought against, but also to its less evident corollary; their powerlessness in the production of social meanings, including social meaning related to the roles of artists and of women. 'Art' was itself complicit in the regulations of sexualities, and in the constructions of femininity which underpinned the identity of the woman artist. (Think of Alma-Tademan's Roman nudes, Pre-Raphaelite Ophelias, the harem scenes of nineteenth-century Orientalism...).[39]

Fanton participated in this debate when she wrote three articles in Craftsman on the issue of women's art; "Clio Hinton Bracken, Woman Sculptor and Symbolist of the New Art,"[40] which describes the genius of sculptor Clio Hinton Bracken (1870-1925), "Is there a Sex Distinction in the Attitude of the Critic towards Women's exhibitions?"[41] which focused on an all-women's exhibition at the Knoedler Galleries in April 1908 and "The Quality of Woman's Art Achievement: A Young Austrian Sculptor who Possesses both Masculine and Feminine Perception,"[42] in December of the same year, when Knoedler presented the works by a Austrian sculpture named Rosa Silberer, whose work had recently appeared in Le Figaro, Vanity Fair and the Studio. Fanton's main argument that Fanton made in the three articles was that there existed separate standards for evaluating art created by men and by women, a set of ideas she appeared to have viewed as being worthy of close scrutiny. More precisely, women's talent was viewed as less important than that of men, even if critical language sometime appeared to argue the contrary:

> And thus it has become somewhat an established precedent that a woman's mediocre effort should be praised as 'good work,' 'fine,' 'a great success,' and her better work pointed out as 'wonderful,' 'the best ever,' or if the critic forgets himself 'Why by Jove, you know you'd almost think it was a man's work!' And so we have unconsciously established separate standards of excellence for men and women in art, as we have in athletics, and when we say a woman is an excellent painter, we usually only mean that her work is about as good as the merely average man artist could do.[43]

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[39] Ibid., 14
[40] Mary Annable Fanton, "Clio Hinton Bracken, Woman Sculptor and Symbolist of the New Art," Craftsman, vol. 8 (July 1905): 472-482
[41] Giles Edgerton, " Is there a Sex Distinction in the Attitude of the Critic towards Women's exhibitions?" Craftsman, vol.14 (June 1908): 239-251
[42] Giles Edgerton, "The Quality of Woman's Art Achievement: A Young Austrian Sculptor who Possesses both Masculine and Feminine Perception" Craftsman, vol. 15 (December 1908): 292-300
[43] Ibid., 292

In the case of the 1905 article on Clio Hinton Bracken, Fanton stated how biased the art community was, not only towards American artists in general, but women artists in particular:

> There are not a dozen women geniuses living in the world at present," was the statement with which a very great artist astonished a group of people at a recent art exhibition. "Not half of these are Americans," he added, "and one woman who undoubtedly has genius with a wonderfully various power of expression, Mrs. Clio Bracken, is still comparatively little known. She has worked quietly and with the serious dignity that sometimes wins recognition, but never pleads for it. And it should be a matter of no small importance to the cynic about American art that one woman, still under thirty, should have manifested a genius that seems to be equally strong and convincing whether expressed in decorative or industrial art; that is on one hand full of the most exquisitely universal, purely poetical feeling, and on the other capable of adapting the most genuine art sense to the most practical detail of industrial improvement.[44]

Following that introductory comment, Fanton them proceeded to describe Bracken's works, all the while emphasizing the genius of this artist. For instance, when describing a sculpture entitled *The Omar Punch Bowl,*[45] she stated:

> Up to know Mrs. Bracken's genius has found no stronger revelation than in the punch bowl which she is decorating with scenes from Omar Khayyam's "Rubaiyat" and which was begun several years in Paris. The final model for this bowl, which is to be reproduced eventually in marble, has been enlarged for a fountain; surely a bowl after Omar's heart, with all the outer space and the wide curving rim carved with dancing, drinking, loving figures, and roses by the hundred drifting down over the merrymakers....Not only one's first glimpse of the fountain is that of joy, but for the first few minutes one has only the sense of gayety, of supreme beauty and gladness. Then slowly, as in life, one realizes the sorrow under all the joy, the pathos back of revelry, if one but sees down to the root of things....[The Omar Punch Bowl] is a study of the Rubaiyat, as that great poem portrays life, and the work of a mighty imagination, of vast insight without experience, and so, of genius. And [Bracken] is less than thirty, with a face of great beauty and a heart full of youthful enthusiasm for life. In her character there is the simplicity of true genius.[46]

Three years later, in 1908, Fanton pushed her argument further by stating in both "Is there a Sex Distinction in the Attitude of the Critic towards Women's exhibitions?"[47] and "The Quality of Woman's Art Achievement: A Young Austrian Sculptor who Possesses both

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[44] Mary Annable Fanton, "Clio Hinton Bracken, Woman Sculptor and Symbolist of the New Art," Craftsman, 472
[45] Figure 12
[46] Ibid., 474, 481. The Rubaiyat is a collection of poems, originally written in the Persian language by mathematician and astronomer Omar Khayyam (1048-1123).
[47] Edgerton, " Is there a Sex Distinction in the Attitude of the Critic towards Women's exhibitions?" Craftsman, 239-251

Masculine and Feminine Perception,"[48] that women's art should not be discriminated against since there was a "sex variation" between men and women that resulted in different artistic originality.[49] More specifically, she argued that men and women had social and gender differences that affected how they viewed life:

> The question is indeed not one of sex discrimination, but of fundamental sex variation in expression, which may only be changed by what some call progress, and some call devastation, in our social system, but scarcely affected by the triumph of the suffragette, or by any greater tribute to the modern woman's brain or beauty. For, far back of all this sex variation in expression lies the great fact that true art must forever reflect existing conditions of life; in other words, a painting must be saturated with the outlook of the painter, and his outlook in turn must be great or small as the lives affords him freedom. [Art] has always demanded freedom, liberty to think straight and see clear, a perfect freedom of observation and experience. It is this freedom , rendered widely divergent in expression by the impress of varying temperament that produces valuable permanent art which becomes a part of a nation's growth. [50]

She disapproved of the gender prejudices that existed in the art community since, in her opinion, a painting was saturated with the outlook of the painter. This outlook could be great or small depending on the artist's life and his/her flexibility to experiment with new things. Fanton did not think it was fair to balance woman's art against men's work and disapproved of women's art imitating men's methods. Instead: "by coupling woman's work *with* man's work [we get] the [most] complete variation in the expression of the life we are now living."[51] In addition, in "Is There a Sex Distinction in Art? The Attitude of the Critic Towards Women's Exhibits," Fanton criticized all-female exhibition because:

> A women's exhibit is something out of the past. It is eighteen-thirty in expression and belongs to the helpless days of crinoline when ladies fainted if they were spoken to with undue harshness... It stands to reason, if one thinks at all about these things, that there must forever be a wide differentiation between the paintings that men do and that women do, because in all the civilized world there is such a tremendous variation in the outlook on life of men and women.[52]

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[48] Edgerton, "The Quality of Woman's Art Achievement: A Young Austrian Sculptor who Possesses both Masculine and Feminine Perception," Craftsman, 292-300

[49] Madlyn Millner Kahr, "Women as Artists and 'Women's Art,'" Woman's Art Journal, vol.3 no.2 (Autumn, 1982-Winter 1983): 28-31

[50] Ibid., 297

[51] Ibid., 298

[52] Edgerton, "Is there a Sex Distinction in Art?" Craftsman, 239 - 240

She felt that with the gender specific exhibitions, critics could remain discriminatory in their views on women's art, and would always revert to calling it inferior to men's, no matter how positive the language used might appear. Indeed, she believed that "the minute that you label any sort of exhibit as exclusively 'women's' you have let the flood gates of masculine sentimentality, and an honest point of view apparently cannot be obtained."[53] Instead, Fanton urged women to demand equal judgment, recognition and standards in regards to their art :

> But grant, as a rule, a compulsory sex difference in art. Look for it, admire it, classify all art by it; all this is just, but it is equally just to go a step farther and rank both the expressions as of equal interest; demanding equal technical excellence, equal standards of perfection in composition, color values and sympathetic understanding of life, and the same courage in facing the attitude of a usually unsympathetic and unappreciative public. It is fatal that women should accept rejection at the hands of big exhibits with a feeling of hurt vanity, turn about and decide 'to have an exhibit of their own anyway, and just hand any picture they want to.' Not that Academy decisions are final towards art, or the juries often reject very important and significant work and hang very dull and inadequate pictures. Indeed, at times this threatens to become the rule, and men have this matter to face as well as women. All that is necessary to point out in this connection is that women should never for one moment admit that the rejection is made because it is *women's* work.[54]

Fanton ended the essay by describing some of the women's works that did effect her, which included an undated *The Good Story*[55] by Clara MacChesney (1860-1928), which Fanton described as "admirably painted, full of life and good cheer; a happy old man with a radiant spirit, no nerves, a keen zest for life, regarding a glass of beer still a pleasant adventure," and an undated *Gamins* by Rhoda Holmes Nicholls (1854-1930), which Fanton posits as "Far more sympathetic as a Venetian water color sketch; 'Gamins,' it was called. A group of gay, picturesque little Italian boys lounging about and laughing in the sunlight; very lightly and delicately painted, yet full of expression and vivid the effect of tone."[56] Furthermore, in the essay "The Quality of Woman's Art Achievement: A Young Austrian Sculptor who Possesses

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[53] Ibid., 242
[54] Ibid., 241
[55] Figure 13
[56] Ibid., 250

both Masculine and Feminine Perception," she used works by Austrian sculptor Rosa Silberer, as an example of an artist who had:

> A combination of a feminine and masculine outlook, neither dominant. And one is puzzled to know whether this artist is moving from one phase of art development to another, or whether she possesses that rare dual quality of a personality which is equally intuitional, whether looking at life from a man's or woman's viewpoint....In the final analysis of this artist's achievement, the conviction is forced upon one that her work has escaped many of the usual limitations of her sex and yet somehow retained much of the tenderness, sensitiveness and sympathetic qualities which women give their art out of their lives - that quality which is born of motherhood, real or potential, and which is one of the compensations which women receive for a certain separateness of life which social conditions so often force upon them.[57]

Despite some contradictions in her writing, as in the appearance of phrases such as "the usual limitations of her sex," Fanton's pleas for equivalent but non-preferential treatment of women's art was not the norm among the art critics of New York. For instance, the Elizabeth Luther Cary of the New York Time praised the all-women's exhibition at the Knoedler Galleries, calling it :

> An interesting variation in the multiplicity of the season's art shows. About fifty artists are represented, and, of course, many more of equal merits are omitted, but the exhibition as a whole presents a dignified and engaging appearance. While there are no works of great originality...there are many that display careful workmanship and a personal point of view, and there are none that deserve to be classed with the nondescript "pot-boilers" which find their way into nearly all general exhibitions."[58]

Indeed, throughout the article Cary emphasized only positive aspects of the show, not once criticizing the work of any female artist, nor the concept of "female-only" exhibitions

Fanton also wrote articles in Craftsman that described the work and artistic achievements of seven different artists who fell outside the major rubrics already examined to this point in Chapters II and III of this thesis. The first artist she promoted was Frederic Remington (1861-1909) in "Remington Frederic, Painter and Sculptor: A Pioneer in

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[57] Ibid., 300

[58] "Paintings Shown by Women Artists," New York Times, 21 April 1908.

Distinctive American Art."[59] An exhibition of his work was on display during the winter of 1909 at the Knoedler Galleries. Fanton used nationalistic arguments when describing the work of Frederic Remington, an American artist who experimented with painting, sculpture and illustration:

> Slowly the artist side of Remington's nature began to apprehend the great final fact that this wonderful enchanted land of limitless undulating prairies, of strange sudden blazing daybreak and slow ineffable twilight trailing off the dawn of all creation, of opalescent mists and purple nights of abounding mystery, of a people serene, simple, loyal moving silently, perhaps unconsciously, in picturesque accoutrements, to oblivion – all this stupendous romantic appeal was his to express on canvas for a world as yet blind to the marvels of the life which he was living. And then all that quality of national pride and devotion which might, under other circumstances, have welled up into patriotism, the making if a soldier, went once and for all into an enthusiasm for the country itself, and the purpose to express that country in an art which should become a part of our national achievement... the presentation of general of specific instances of definite conditions inherent in a civilization, that is vital, for it is putting on record the peculiar personality of a nation which is of interest for future generations of all nations[60]

She confirmed that Remington was so American in temperament and personality that even while training in Europe, he never lost his American roots. When Fanton described a few of Frederic Remington sculptures depicting scenes of western pioneering life such as *The Emigrants,*[61] *Sketches of American Indian Types* and *The Ceremony of the Scalps*, she characterized them as representing American heroes of the past. Finally, Fanton praised Remington since, "he has achieved the fullest and freest expression for his individual ideas, choosing only those subjects which he feels are vastly significant to us as a nation and suiting his technique with infinite variety to the most sympathetic expression of these ideas."

An essay entitled "Wilhelm Funk: A Painter of Personality,"[62] discussed the portrait works by the German-American painter Wilhelm Funk (1866-1949), who held a one-man show during the winter of 1908-1909 at the Knoedler Galleries. In this essay, Fanton focused

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[59] Giles Edgerton, " Remington Frederic, Painter and Sculptor: A Pioneer in Distinctive American Art," Craftsman, vol.15 (March 1909): 658-670
[60] Ibid., 662
[61] Figure 14
[62] Giles Edgerton, "Wilhelm Funk: A painter of Personality," Craftsman, vol.16 (May 1909):160-167

on how Funk transcribed the personalities of the sitters in his portrait paintings: "[Funk] has made it the purpose of his life to discover and express personality with all the beauty which great gift and sympathy and patience could make possible."[63] According to Fanton, Funk's mission was to discover and express the varying psychology and temperament of the sitters, thus creating portraits that expressed their inner identity. She stated that:

> Fortunately there is the artist who will not paint a portrait unless it is possible to make the painting also a true psychological study and expression of the most complete individuality which he can achieve in the right surroundings and thorough tireless effort. Wilhelm Funk is one of these men...he desires also through his technique to paint temperament, the final quality of each subject to reveal all the truth about each personality which may relate to art, and to reveal it in the most beautiful manner in which truth may be told.[64]

Fanton approved of Funk's ability to transcribe the human psyche of the sitter instead of superficially painting the subject's expression on canvas. She illustrated this article by displaying a photograph of the artist with his painting tools and one of his paintings entitled *La Petite Angeline.*[65]

Other newspapers also discussed Wilhelm Funk's exhibition, such as the New York Times. However, none delved into the issue of the psychology of the sitters as much as Fanton. For instance, the New York Time wrote a paragraph about the exhibition, but only listed and highlighted some of the portraits: "[Funk's] works range from a pretty child's portrait, Miss Ann Seton, to the dignified head of E.J. Prime, simply and solidly painted and straightforward in expression: on the whole the best portraits in the collection, though by no means ambitious.... Mr. Funk's has a natural tendency toward the bold use of color and towards a frank attack upon the canvas, and a crisp, vigorous brushwork.... "[66]

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[63] Ibid., 160
[64] Ibid., 161
[65] Figure 15
[66] "Gallery Notes: Funk Portraits on View, " New York Times, 10 January 1909

In the essay, "A Great Painter of Simple People,"[67] Fanton examined the works by Lucien Simon (1861-1945), an artist from Brittany whose works were shown that year at the Albright Art Gallery in Buffalo. Fanton begins her essay by providing a brief biography of his early years and described his career in France. In addition, she explained his evolution as an artist and listed his many achievements:

> And yet, as we study about Lucien Simon's, as we see a full exhibit of his work, as we remember the paintings in Paris and in the other large continental galleries, we realized that this was but one phase of his art, that he might easily have become known as a painter of home life, of kind mothers and dear children, of old ladies, placid, serene and strong, like the portrait of his mother, of young people thoughtful of the future, of genius like his study of the young violoncellist, of typical scenes about Paris where character is wonderfully interpreted, where technique is as fresh as thought and both saturated with imagination towards life. And as we realize how many interests in art Simon has had, how many varieties of expression have claimed his thought, and his genius, we marvel afresh that he should have found through it all Brittany – the essential channel for his knowledge of composition, construction, his force and brilliancy.[68]

The main point Fanton made in this article is that Simon exuded great vitality in his artistic corpus that stemmed from his need to paint humanity and all the experiences life brings.[69] According to Fanton, "[Lucien Simon] has presented in th[ese] picture[s] one of the great truths of all life and all civilisations."[70] Finally, she illustrated the article with two paintings by the artist *The Pursuit* and *Portrait of my Mother,*[71] both undated.

A year later, an article appeared in the New York Times discussing the works of French artists, including Lucien Simon. The critic mentioned his Albright exhibition and stated that "Something rude and solid in his execution corresponds to the subject taken from peasant life and his unexpectedness of line is inspiring. In spite of the heaviness of his color, his picture has in it more of the outdoor atmosphere than any other in the room."[72]

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[67] Mary Fanton Roberts, "A Great Painter of Simple People" Craftsman, vol.25 (February 1914): 416- 422
[68] Ibid., 416
[69] Ibid., 421
[70] Ibid., 417
[71] Figure 16
[72] "French Art Shown in New York" New York Times, 13 June 1915

In conclusion, as an art critic and co-editor of Craftsman, Mary Fanton Roberts role was to present and critique artists and exhibitions of different nationalities in the journal, all the while writing articles that were favourable to the journal's philosophy. As was seen in this chapter, Fanton had other interests besides American identity in art; she promoted photography as an art form, she argued against the all-female exhibition, and she presented the works of various American and European artists. She focused on a theoretical framework based on analyzing the psychological, emotional and intellectual experiences developed in the artist's work. By doing so, Mary Fanton remained temperate in her opinions, establishing her impressions within a juste-milieu, not pushing an extreme idea, nor falling back on the Academy of Design conservative opinions. Her open theoretical framework allowed her to discuss many different artists of varying progressive movements. For instance, Mary Fanton reviewed radical artist groups such as Alfred Stieglitz Photo-Secession Movement. However, she did not critique their work using the radical vocabulary and ideas promulgated by the more avant-garde art community, but used her own moderate opinions. As will be seen in Chapter 4, Fanton continued to discuss the visual arts in the next phase of her career, but did so by using a more unifying notion of 'Art for Life Sake.'

CHAPTER IV
Mary Fanton Roberts and her Art Writings in The Touchstone, 1917-1921

When Mary Fanton Roberts founded Touchstone in 1917, much of the spirit of the Craftsman journal was retained. As noted by the New York Times, she employed many of the staff from the former magazine: "A new magazine has been started to fill the place of The Craftsman. It is called The Touchstone, and is almost entirely edited by the former staff of The Craftsman, headed by Mrs. Mary Fanton Roberts as editor in chief." The New York Times reporter went on to observe that "the field covered is practically the same as that of the earlier magazine, with somewhat greater variety of subject, to judge from the first number,"[1] a conclusion that was in many respects quite accurate. In general, the articles in Touchstone were similar to those in Craftsman: the subjects ranged from art, dance, literature, to architecture, home decor and design. For example, in the first issue of volume 8 (October 1920), eight articles were written on architecture, five discussed art and sculpture, and one essay was written on gardening. In addition, three short stories and one poem were included. However, as might have been expected given the timing of the magazine's foundation, it was very much concerned with World War I, and published many articles commenting on the war effort and the aftermath of the war. Essayists wrote about democracy, patriotism, and the war conditions on American and European soil

Although not suggested by the New York Times writer, Touchstone also differed from Craftsman because the topic of American identity in art was no longer given priority. A transition occurred in the critical discourse of American art and identity due in part to the Armory Show of 1913 and the impact of World War I, which created a cultural rejection of Europe as the centre of the art world. During the war, artists and art critics alike believed that such authority would shift to America, and that the emphasis would be on American instead of

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[1] Barry Sanders, The Craftsman: An Anthology (Santa Barbara: Peregrine Smith Inc., 1978), 14. The quote was taken from "A New Art Magazine," New York Times, 13 May 1917

European art: "For the first time Europe seeks inspiration at our shores in the persons of a group of modernists French artists who find Europe impossible because of its war-drenched atmosphere...the effect of this migration will be far-reaching on the art of America."[2] The art community also believed that the effects of war would purge the decadence of modernism, which was seen by conservatives as an attack on freedom and American values.[3] As well, the Academy of Design's imprint on the city's intellectual life was slowly fading, and no longer influenced the New York City art community as it had in first decade of the 20th century.[4] A new dialogue developed in American art circles: critics were no longer lamenting over the mimetic tendencies in America art, nor about the lack of a distinctive American style. Artists in New York City finally had the maturity and desire to develop an art form that was characteristically their own, without having to revert to or assimilate styles from European schools. Furthermore, they had the vocabulary, experience, and sufficient belief in individual expression to view American art in new and personal terms.

Touchstone magazine was part of a larger enterprise, which Roberts called 'Touchstone House'.[5] The building not only included the floors where the periodical was edited, but also featured a floor that had two art galleries called 'Touchstone Galleries,' as well as an outside garden. In its first issue, Fanton described the going rates of the different gallery spaces in the Touchstone building: "For the first few months, these Galleries will be rented as follows: $30.00 for two weeks for the small gallery, $40.00 for two weeks for the large, lighted in both

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[2] New York Tribune, 21 October 1915

[3] Milton W Brown, American Painting: From the Armory Show to the Depression (New Jersey: Princeton University Press., 1955): 85. However, this prediction proved incorrect since in the United States, modernism was to become a major concern in the 1920's and 1930's as art critics and artists came to terms with the highly complex aesthetic theories related to this progressive art form. For more information see Susan Noyes Platt. Modernism in the 1920's: Interpretation of Modern Art in New York from Expressionism to Constructivism (Michigan: UMI Research Press., 1985): 1

[4] Arlene R. Olson, Art Critic and the Avant-Garde, New York 1900-1913 (Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1980): 16

[5] Mary Fanton Roberts, "Art Notes," Touchstone, vol.5 (December 1919): 318

cases. Or the two galleries may be rented for two weeks for $70.00."[6] It is not known how popular the Touchstone gallery spaces were with the public, however, in one of her reviews in Volume 5, dating September 1917, she promoted them by describing who had exhibited so far:

> Since the opening of the Touchstone House, where the Touchstone Magazine is edited, the Touchstone Art Galleries have given a series of most interesting exhibitions. An entire floor of the Touchstone House is given to the galleries...Among the many artists who expressed their pleasure in exhibiting with us were Robert Henri, Childe Hassam, W.J. Glackens, John Sloan, Eugene Speicher, J.Alden Weir, Everett Shinn. The Touchstone House offers a very cordial invitation to all subscribers and friends of subscribers to visit the gardens and galleries when in New York.[7]

Fanton wrote on many of the exhibitions that were displayed at the Touchstone Galleries, and they were also noted in other New York publications.[8]

If the creation of "Touchstone House" reflected Fanton's ambition to play an important role in the American art world, it is nevertheless the journal that is of primary concern here and a brief account of the different sections of Touchstone helps to better understand how Fanton conceived of the publication component of her new enterprise. She created a section called 'Art Notes' that was present in each issue, to comment on the various art exhibitions happening in New York City: "to present a very complete and interested review each month of current exhibitions will be one of the purposes and pleasures of the magazine."[9] She also included another section called 'The American Art Student: A Bureau of Discussion and Information' inserted alongside 'Art Notes,' a component that reflected the fact that a magazine entitled The American Art Student was taken over by Touchstone in 1917. This section was made up of

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[6] Mary Fanton Roberts., "The Touchstone Galleries," Touchstone, vol. ,1 (June 1917): 114
[7] Ibid.
[8] There were a total of seven reviews in the New York Times discussing the works exhibited at the Touchstone Galleries, which included the work of a young Algerian painter named Violet Mège (1889-1966) who exhibited various landscape and portrait paintings from November to December 1917, and the work of American artist Joseph Cummings Chase (1878 – 1965) who exhibited paintings of soldiers in the trenches of Europe in January 1920; and the watercolours of American artist Charles N. Sarka (1879-1960) depicting landscapes and portraits in January of 1921.
[9] Roberts, "Art Notes," 114

short informative essays, and reported on various exhibitions, new art guilds and the opening of schools for the trades in New York City and in other parts of the United States

The transformation in American art discourse is exemplified by the general contents of the Touchstone, and through the specific contributions of Fanton herself: she wrote a total of fourteen articles in Touchstone focused on the fine arts; three were on individual members of the Eight, two debated the works of the younger artist versus the older or more mature artist, two focused on European war-artists, and the rest were on various European or American artists. As will be seen, Fanton wrote more articles on European artists in Touchstone than she did in Craftsman. In Craftsman, where she was employed for eleven years, Fanton only wrote on four foreign artists, whereas in Touchstone, a publication that lasted only four years, she wrote articles on five European artists. This was perhaps due to the changes in the New York City art community, where Europe and its artists were no longer seen as a threat .

In the first issue, Fanton announced that Touchstone would be "particularly interested in modern art, in the youth of all art", and it would be watching "for every expression of freshness and originality in the art of America."[10] She also reminded her readers that she would not abandon those whom she had previously supported:

> Of course, this does not mean that we do not regard with the greatest seriousness the work of the pioneers in art in America, and the work of the (I had almost said) middle aged artist, as though any true artist were ever anything but a youth and a student. But what I wish to say is that we will care above all about the men who have made the world know that America has her own art – men like Henri, Glackens, and Sloan, Borglum, Bellows and a host of others whose opinions and accomplishments will be the backbone of this magazine.[11]

Following the convictions that she had articulated earlier in Craftsman, Fanton associated the Eight with the development of a national art in America, and acknowledged that American artists had finally gained the maturity and experience to paint the spirit of their own country.

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[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.

In general, the articles and reviews in Touchstone profiled a variety of different artists such as the members of the Eight, George Grey Barnard (1863-1938), Mahonri Young (1877-1957), Max Weber (1864-1920), Théophile Steinlen (1859-1923), Hunt Diederich (1884-1953), Paul Cézanne (1839-1906), Auguste Rodin (1840-1917), Edgar Degas (1834-1917), Paul Gauguin (1848-1903), and Boris Anisfeld (1879-1973). The magazine also discussed different exhibitions like those of the Society of Independent Artists and those shown at the Macbeth and Montross galleries. Finally, Touchstone was no longer concerned with the Academy of Design; articles that would have normally been written about the Academy's spring exhibition or its activities were never chronicled during the lifetime of the magazine.[12]

Mary Fanton Roberts' continued support of Robert Henri and the Eight

As she promised in the first issue of Touchstone, Fanton kept her word and supported the work of the Eight. [13] During the four years the magazine was in circulation, the Eight's ideologies permeated many volumes of the journal. With the exception of Volumes Two and Three, at least one article written by or about a member of the Eight was published in every volume. In the first issue of Touchstone alone, Henri, Glackens, and Bellows all contributed articles.[14] In Fanton's exhibition review 'Art Notes,' she also positively critiqued some of the member's works that were showing at various galleries in New York City.[15] Finally, in

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[12] Avis Berman, "'As National as the National Biscuit Company': The Academy, the Critics and the Armory Show," ed. David B. Bearinger, Rave Reviews: American Art and its Critics, 1826-1925 (New York: National Academy of Design, 2000): 132-133

[13] Roberts, "Art Notes," 114

[14] These include the following: W.J. Glackens, "The Biggest Art Exhibition in America, and incidentally, War," Touchstone, vol.1, (July 1917): 164-173; Robert Henri, "The Big Exhibition: the Artist and the Public" Touchstone, vol.1 (July 1917): 174 – 177; George Bellows, "The Big Idea: George Bellows talks about Patriotism for Beauty" Touchstone, vol.1 (August 1917): 269 – 375.

[15] The following art exhibitions reviews were made about the Eight in Art Notes: in "Art Notes" Touchstone vol. 1, (June 1917): 114, Mary Fanton lists the one-man exhibitions that John Sloan, Robert Henri and William J. Glackens presented. In "Art Notes" Touchstone, vol. 4 (December 1918): 171, she describes Robert Henri exhibition at the Montross Gallery, George Bellows art work on display at the Keppel Gallery, and William J. Glackens picture presented at the Bryant Park Library. In "Art Notes" Touchstone, vol.5 (July 1919): 318-319, she again discusses the exhibitions at Touchstone Galleries which included John Sloan, Robert Henri and William Glackens. Finally, in "Art Notes", Touchstone, vol.6 (December 1919): 268, she presented the first important exhibition of the year which, once again includes Robert Henri, William J. Glackens and Everett Shinn.

Touchstone, she also published her own essays discussing the works of Bellows, Sloan, Glackens, Henri and Luks, and an analysis of these articles will be presented shortly. What changed, however, was that she no longer used their work as an example of American identity in art; more specifically, she commented on their work without expressing any nationalistic theme. It would appear that the idea of American nationalism in art so prominent in the early years of Craftsman was a resolved concept for her by the time she founded Touchstone. This is best demonstrated by an article she published in Volume Seven of Touchstone titled "Modern Sculpture in America: Its Value to the Art History of the Nation."[16] Here she commends American sculptors, especially those working with bronze, for how far they have gone in creating an art form that is stylistically and nationally their own: "It has taken us long in America to become creators of an art at once honest, fearless and national in expression."[17] She begins by giving a brief historical account of American art, describing the problems and hardships that the new nation was facing, and confirmed that only now had American artists found their own artistic method: "Until very recent years we have possessed no distinctive national art, because we had not yet actually a distinctive flavour. For an art to be truly national must spring from an irresistible desire of the artist to depict conditions about him with their truths, an understanding of which must be born in a man's blood – an understanding, a comradeship no alien could experience."[18] She stated that World War I brought social and industrial improvements in America, which enabled artists to finally have a platform upon which to develop themes and styles that were characteristically about their country: "At last America is no longer at the mercy of every new and old imported art impulse. We are learning to do the modifying ourselves; and are adapting foreign conditions for our own digestion."[19] She credited American art with being fresh, impulsive, frank, audacious, and humorous - all

[16] Mary Fanton Roberts, "Modern Sculpture in America: It's Value to the Art History of the Nation," Touchstone, vol.7 (Julyl 1920): 283-289.
[17] Ibid., 285
[18] Ibid., 283-284
[19] Ibid., 284

qualities that she believed were not present in the art of older nations since they were confined to a more traditional art history.

In order to support her opinions, she used the works of American sculptor Frederic Remington as an example of a great American artist who painted what he experienced in his own country: "Remington felt the rhythm of these slow-moving prairie days, and wide empty blue nights; he knew the exultation of galloping mile after mile from nowhere into the unknown. And his bronze work as well as his painting thrilled with the inspiration of the great new old West, with the life of the Indians who are leaving it, cowboys who vivified it...."[20] Interestingly, she did not illustrate the essay with any of Remington's bronze sculptures, instead preferring to publish two undated sculptures, one by George Gray Barnard (1863-1938) titled *The Great God Pan*, and another titled *Fountain* by Carol Brooks Macneil (1871-1944). Finally, she confirmed that American art had established an individual expression stemming from its own culture and conditions. Those of her readers who were aware of Fanton's support of the Eight, would have recognized that the Eight's own achievements had influenced her thinking on modern American bronze sculpture.

When writing on the visual arts in Touchstone, Fanton adopted the 'Art for Life Sake' principle as theorized by Robert Henri. Like Henri, she affirmed that true and original works of art resulted when artists expressed their ideas of life in total and absolute freedom. This philosophy enabled Fanton to remain open to new forms of art and allowed her to view works in a positive manner. As will be seen, this credo is present in all of her Touchstone articles that discuss not only the works by Robert Henri and the Eight, but also the works of other artists. Furthermore, she also allowed Henri, Glackens, Sloan and Bellows to communicate their own artistic philosophies freely in Touchstone as they all maintained similar ideas about the relationship of the artist towards his own work.

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[20] Ibid., 287-288

One of the best examples demonstrating her 'promotional' attitude towards the Eight is the article entitled "John Sloan, His Art and Its Inspiration"[21] This essay was in part written in response to an exhibition of Sloan's work in March 1917 at the Kraushaar Galleries that displayed a series of his etchings, drawings and paintings. In her essay, Fanton credited Sloan with painting humanity as he saw it in everyday life:

> His interest is in life, in the fire that burns in young life, its robust energy....He is interested in the psychology and the sociology of all existence, and has the rare vision that enables him to see the truth about it, and the rare gift that enables him to help you to see the truth also. He has no criticism of life; the most commonplace thing interests him, and because it interests him, he gives it to you with a graciousness of line and color that somehow brings to you a sense of delight and beauty. Through every painting of Sloan's there is a marvellous quality of unity, there is no chance selection of subject, of spacing of grouping in Sloan's pictures. He finds for his canvas the unity that he sees in life...On a walk up Fifth Avenue, this artist will see the rich young girl with her beauty and her ignorance's of life, he will see the poor daughter of the poorest workman with all her grime and her ignorance's, but, also, he will give them both to you through his art so that you feel and see their possibilities and hopes and beauty.[22]

Fanton juxtaposed those comments with an illustration of Sloan's 1912 work titled *Spring in Madison Square.*[23] To end her essay, Fanton integrated comments by Robert Henri because "only someone who has known John Sloan all his life, through all his development, should really speak of his art."[24] Henri reiterated the same views as Fanton, praising Sloan's work for his search for life's feelings and expressions:

> [John Sloan] meets nature with no causal affableness, he is not a superficial lover, what he does is without apology. There is the great reality back of everything, it is the reality which interests him – he sees past the surface, his technique is bent and moulded to carry us beyond into the intricate wonders of the yet unknown – the deeper lives and feelings of humanity. Because he has motive his line and his color must be constructive, must have unity, must lead, and we must be caught in the sway and the power of it – carried on because of its strength of correlation into his king of thought and feeling about nature, about life, and the human heart.[25]

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[21] Mary Fanton Roberts, "John Sloan: His Art and Its Inspiration" Touchstone, Vol. 4, (December 1918): 362 – 366

[22] Ibid., 363

[23] Figure 17. This work is also known as *Sunday Afternoon in Union Square.*

[24] Ibid., 364

[25] Ibid. 364

Three months before Fanton's article, Elizabeth Luther Cary, art critic of the New York Times wrote a short critique on John Sloan's exhibition, briefly translating in similar ways what Fanton and Henri would later say in their Touchstone article:

> [John Sloan] whose remarkable talent combines two qualities seldom found together, the subtle irony of a deeply initiated mind and appreciation of popular feelings and the sentiment of ordinary situations.... John Sloan gives you full measure of human expressiveness, no one in the modern school gives more. But up his sleeve he keeps a painter who works for him gaily, whatever his subject, however crass and dull the material. His draftsmanship also is indefatigable. He keeps the organic quality of the most shapeless mass of flesh. It is an exhibition to be visited if one expects to know the best that has been made of the American labouring class as subjects of art.[26]

Two other articles written by Fanton represented well the transition she made when examining works by the members of the Eight and no longer used their work as examples of a true American theme. Rather, she described them as mature yet sophisticated artists who painted under the credo of 'Art for Life's Sake'. In her article titled "A Distinguished Group of Artists,"[27] Fanton questioned the role of the art critic by using a Touchstone Gallery exhibition that displayed works by six older artists; Van Dearing Perrine (1868-1955), Jonas Lie (1880-1940), Randall Davey (1887-1964), Robert Henri, John Sloan and William Glackens. According to her, art critics of New York City were divided into two camps when it came to the works of more mature artists like the Eight: "I found to my amazement that on one hand the critics bitterly reproached these men as no longer having the point of view of youth, of progressive youth, while another set of critics were equally condemnatory because these men were still open-minded, still vigorously in touch with life, still young in spirit, though vastly accomplished in technique."[28] For Fanton it was not a question of youth or experience, but more about: "how much progress I see from one time to another in the work of the most progressive men."[29] Although Fanton did not mention who critics wrote these negative

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[26] "Art at Home and Abroad," New York Times, 25 March 1917
[27] Mary Fanton Roberts, "A Distinguished Group of Artists" Touchstone, vol.6 (November 1919): 200 - 206
[28] Ibid.,203
[29] Ibid.

remarks, she reminded her readers that the critics of the day disliked it when artists such as Henri or Sloan changed their techniques because, in their opinion, their work was no longer recognizable: "Because Henri is a great student of humanity, because he uses rich and manifold knowledge of art to express his sympathy with humanity, because his philosophy is a forever unfolding, deeper and wider as he knows life better, a critic sees a new picture by Henri done in a fresh mood, with a new, a subtle technique, and shake his head mournfully and says 'Why does so great a painter vacillate in his methods?'"[30] Opposed to such rigid ideas, Fanton wanted to see an evolution in the artist's style and a continual growth in the pictures that they exhibited. She highlighted this by explaining how different the three Henri paintings were in the exhibition:

> At this particular exhibition there are three different Henri's, not only different in subject, but in feeling and manner. A very brilliant Spanish one, that gives you a sense of dancing motion, it radiates such splendid color and light. But with all its verve and intensity, it is done in a more conventional manner than many less dashing portraits of his. A portrait done of a little girl down as Santa Fe last year, is really a study of sympathy and tenderness, and the medium used seems luscious and infinitely more harmonious to the subject. A study of an older American girl is in most interesting contrast, a most vivacious model The paint is handled in a very simple, brilliant fashion. It is a painting of all youth and happiness.[31]

Interestingly enough, Fanton only illustrated the second of Henri's paintings, a 1917 work titled *The Little Girl of the Southwest*[32] as well an undated *Along the Wharves* by Jonas Lie. In conclusion, she believed that Henri's artistic renewal was what art criticism should focus upon and not whether an artist was too young or too experienced.

The comparison between the young inexperienced artist versus the more mature and consummate one is once again examined in Fanton's essay entitled "Some Sketches and Their

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[30] Ibid., 205
[31] Ibid.
[32] Figure 18

Inspiration."[33] She begins by stating that painting from real life was the essence of artistic genius:

> I find that so many artists today are seeking to express in painting, sculpture, even in the lightest sketches, their own ideas of life, that quality or emotion which they crave most earnestly, which is most thrilling to them and which almost unconsciously dominates all their efforts....I feel it in John Sloan's work. In everything I have seen of Sloan's, whether it is the illustration of an old French story, a village street in Monhegan, a New York roof in the slums at twilight, he is presenting to you his own humanitarian outlook on life. [34]

However many young artists, although talented, might not yet have the experience or the patience to be able to make tangible their vision of life like those of older artists such as John Sloan:

> I have felt this seeking to make tangible one's vision of life in so many of the exhibitions held at the Touchstone Galleries. For perhaps fifty percent of these exhibitions was the work of the younger artists, even of the more fearless and reckless, those who want not only to portray their vision but to express every changing phase of the day's work. This desire to tell the story of one's spiritual experience once a day sometimes results in confusion, sometimes in weakness and futility; on the other hand it keeps alive an immeasurable light of life and an ever changing vivid interest in the progress of the individual brain and soul.[35]

More importantly, although she did not name which young artists she believed were more reckless or created confusing and weak images, she did contend that:

> With some of these sincere young people, the stamp of one great ideal is impressed upon all the output of work for weeks and months and years, however the subject changes or the technique varies. It is no longer deemed essential for a painter to paint only portraits or figures or landscapes of still life, and he may have a technique for every subject. But often the whole scheme of artistic endeavour is dominated and overwhelmed with the one great unsatisfied desire.[36]

She admitted that there were some young artists whose works were worthy, such as the American artist and dancer Stella Bloch (1897-1999), one of the six original dance pupils of the famous modern dancer Isadora Duncan (1877-1927). Bloch also sketched and painted, and started exhibiting her artwork in New York City in 1919. Fanton chose to illustrate throughout

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[33] Mary Fanton Roberts, "Some Sketches and Their Inspirations," Touchstone, vol.7 (April 1920): 36 - 40
[34] Ibid., 36
[35] Ibid.,
[36] Ibid., 36, 39

the essay sketches by Bloch of different figures, such as *A Young Woman* Sewing,[37] and *A Dancer Kneeling*, both undated. Of these drawings, Fanton posited that:

> In Stella Bloch's work as I saw it in The Touchstone Gallery I felt at once her immense and sincere interest in strength, in reality in force. In all the expressions in her drawings you see her desire to impress you with the solidity of the forms, with richness of gesture and warmth of human development.... In Stella Bloch's more static work there is grace, the grace of a strong relaxed body, a well poised head, youthful capable arms and hands. I find especially attractive the seated figure of the woman sewing. It is done with so little effort and so sure a stroke. The woman is intensely interested in her work and intensely alive and interested to the beholder.[38]

To conclude, Fanton asserted that:

> I realize that I am saying a great deal about a young, new artist, but I have never been able to understand why excellent new work was not just as interesting and inspiring as excellent old work. I am aware that in many cases old work may be better and should be better, because experience is a marvellous teacher under the control of love and imagination. But very often love and imagination does not control the work of the established artists, and youth with even less gift will sometimes present you with so much freshness, so much delight, such transcendent ideals that its right to recognition should not be ignored.[39]

Fanton's assimilation of the 'Life for Art Sake' principle is the main focus of her 1920 essay entitled "W.J. Glackens: His Significance to the Art of his Day."[40] There she praised him for his importance to America by explaining:

> He is so distinct and separate a personality in American art. His interest and his influence are so widespread that one thinks of him inevitably as a great artist and then more specifically in relation to his painting and illustrating. From his younger days he has been one of the most potent influences for sincere art in this country, and I think there are very few illustrators whom we think of as successful today who have not received a rich inspiration from his vigorous fruitful expression...If a man [like Glackens] possesses a deep rich personality, those qualities are bound to reach out to the world through his art and through his speech, because a man really influences life by his personality far more that by his conscious efforts.[41]

She then interviewed Robert Henri for his opinion on his friend's oeuvre. Henri explained that the only important things were that a man should have a: "distinct vision, a new and fresh

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[37] Figure 19
[38] Ibid., 39
[39] Ibid., 40
[40] Mary Fanton Roberts, "W.J. Glackens: His Significance to the Art of his Day" Touchstone, vol.7 (June 1920): 191 - 195
[41] Ibid., 191

insight into life, into nature, into human character, that he should see the lie about him so clearly that he sees past the local and the national expression into the universal; so much so, that when he draws a pretty girl, it is the charm of all women that he is presenting rather than one."[42] He continued: "I feel so strongly in Glackens work this universal touch with life; that he sees all of life with his fullest capacity, with the richest kind of sympathy, and that he portrays it with a delightful touch of criticism that gives spice to his admiration. He has always been a remarkable colorist, and in whatever medium he works, there is always the distinct Glackens."[43]

Robert Henri and the Eight: Their articles in The Touchstone and their perspective on art

The imprint of the Eight on Touchstone was not only carried through writings by Fanton and other critics, but was also manifested through the publication of articles by the members of the group. Robert Henri, William Glackens and George Bellows each wrote an article in the first volume of Touchstone. William Glackens' commented on the inconsistencies of avant-garde art, Robert Henri argued about the benefits and/or problems that arose when showing works in larger exhibitions and George Bellows expressed his opinion on democracy and the freedom of expression in art.

In the first issue of Volume 1 of Touchstone, Fanton allowed both Robert Henri and William Glackens an arena to comment on the first annual exhibition of the Society of Independents of 1917, shown at the Grand Central Palace. The main goal behind the show was to seize credit once and for all from the Academy of Design for the official annual exhibition in New York.[44] Unlike the Academy, this annual exhibition was open to anyone who wanted to

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[42] Ibid., 192
[43] Ibid.
[44] Milroy, Painters of a New Century: The Eight & American Art, 95.

display their work, and the venue was without juries or prizes; any artist who paid the one dollar initiation fee and five dollars annual dues could participate.[45] Moreover, on the suggestion of avant-garde artist Marcel Duchamp, the installation was organized alphabetically, starting with the randomly selected letter 'R'. With some twenty-five hundred works of painting and sculpture by twelve hundred American and European artists, the first annual exhibition was almost twice the size of the Armory Show of 1913. Participants ranged from the liberal academic to the radical avant-garde; works exhibited included sculptor and art patron Gertrude Whitney's (1879-1942) *Titanic Memorial*, which she had begun in 1914, John Covert's (1882- 1960) *Temptation of Saint Anthony,* dating 1913-1914, William Glackens' 1916 *Beach Side* and John Sloan's *Blonde Nude*, 1917. Besides Glackens and Sloan, none of the other founding member's of the Eight participated in the inaugural exhibition. William Glackens was the president of the Independents at the time, and in his Touchstone article entitled "The Biggest Art Exhibition in America and, Incidentally War,"[46] he argued that large-scale exhibition elicited more public attention, even if, in his opinion, smaller venues carried greater educational value:

> The public in this country takes more interest in a big show and so the big show carries its own advertising... Such an exhibition once a year is looked forward to; it attracts attention and takes its place as an event. The public as a whole, will not look in to any small venture, but anything stupendous brings out the curiosity-seeker; the student are all eager for it. I am not sure that it carries much educational value. The student must seek that in the smaller exhibition, in the one-man shows...You cannot wake up the public with a series of the best small exhibitions ever seen.[47]

However, Glackens specified that although large exhibitions attracted interest from art critics and the general public:

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[45] Ibid., 95. The Society of Independent Artists was an association of artists founded in 1916 and based in New York City. The founders of the Society were Walter Arensberg (1878-1954), John Covert (1882-1968), Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968), Katherine Sophie Dreier (1877-1952), William J. Glackens, Albert Gleizes (1881-1953), John Marin (1870-1953), Walter Pach (1883-1958), Man Ray (1890-1976), John Sloan and Joseph Stella (1877-1946). For more information on the Society of Independent Artists, see Milroy, 95.

[46] J. W. Glackens, "The Biggest Art Exhibition in America and Incidentally War" Touchstone, vol. 1 (July 1917): 164 – 173

[47] Ibid. 166

> Of course an Independent Show cannot make artists. You will hear people say that Cézanne was discovered in an Independent Show in Paris. But my impression is that we would have discovered Cézanne, if there had never been an exhibition in the world. Great art has a way of cutting through public consciousness. The big exhibition may help the small artist to discover himself, but a man of Cézanne's breed we shall find, the world over, sooner or later.[48]

Glackens specified that when he viewed an exhibition, he looked to understand the fundamental idea behind the artist's work. Furthermore, he felt that modern art, or more specifically abstraction, purposely hid the artist's original idea in their art thus creating a work of no educational value to the public:

> I am always looking for just two things at an exhibition, the way a man paints and the idea back of the paint; for art is not in the thing itself ever, it is in *you*. It's your idea and your originality and interesting way of expressing your idea. The art that is all technique is a pretty poor ready-made thing. A great deal of this so-called modern art is pure materialism, the pouring out through symbols of a half-baked psychology, a suppressed adolescence. So many of the new schools of painting and sculpture seem to have learned the lessons before an audience and the technique is redolent of big words. Art isn't just emptiness or amusement or whimsicality....If the public does not perceive any educational value in these big exhibitions it is not wholly the size; it is because certain modern artists elect to disguise rather than to explain in their art. Their pictures are just working drawings, plan elevations made into a design. Of course every man has a right to paint just as he pleases, but one cannot get too far away from representation [which the modernists are so afraid of] without reacting into materialism. A man is afraid to paint in the usual forms for fear he will represent the character and quality of a human being with a piece of wire and a few glass eyes. Hunting for new expressions is all very well, but it cannot be very important unless you know and then find one. So many of the painters today hunt and end in a *cul de sac* over and over again, until the art that they give us seems to be nothing but a metaphysical tangle. I take it that art is something finer than a chance to bewilder the public.[49]

The two works chosen to illustrate his article were by two older artists who favoured representational painting; *Autumn Flickering Sun*[50] by James Weiland (1872–1968) and *Grieg*[51] by George Mather Richards (1880-1958). Glackens did not comment on either painting in his essay, instead choosing to focus entirely on the pros and cons of a large exhibition such as the Independent show.

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[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid., 165, 173
[50] Figure 20
[51] Figure 21

Other art critics feared that the arbitrary installation – the placement of the artist's paintings in alphabetical order starting with 'R' – would harm works of real quality. For instance, the art critic Elizabeth Luther Cary of the New York Times questioned the purpose of this type of organization:

> The society has taken for its program that of the Société des Artistes Indépendants of Paris....no jury no prize is the watchword of the French society, and it has been adopted by the American Independents. The latter have added an entirely new measure for the securing of equality in placing all the works in strictly alphabetically order. Those who dispute the logic of our famous national assertion that all men are born free and equal, ignoring its spiritual values, may find even greater difficulty in accepting the complete equality of opportunity offered by the grouping of the painters whose names begin with B for example. The phrase 'equality of opportunity' slips easily from the tongue and, put into practise, gives rise to many embarrassing situations, but the idea at the back of it is coming persistently to the fore as the leading principle of the American exhibition system. There will always be those to whom the idea is abhorrent, who would ask artist to trust their works to the public only in small and chosen companies with a cautiously selected environment. These are the fastidious ones who would restore the ancient thread-and-needle shop and who purchase their luxuries at the small and expensive places of restricted offerings and reticent announcements.[52]

However, she determined that although awkward, the exhibition permitted many artists and artists groups a chance to show their work to a larger public: "But the fact remains that today in America many schools of art exist and deeply desire publicity and the chance to show their and sell their work without favour of jury, who will accept without rebellion an alphabetical denomination in the list if certainty of being hung with it..."[53] Finally, Cary determined that one had to keep an open mind and not discriminate in an exhibition as large as this one since :

> One cannot, however, approach such an exhibition in any mood of close discrimination, since size and heterogeneity forbid fine distinctions to affirm themselves. The itinerant critic must find his account in the historic importance of a moment that thrusts art so valiantly into the front ranks as competitor with war and the new complications of trade....A general review of the clustered walls reveals the possibility of certain broad classifications. The art show is all modern, but not by any means all 'modernist,' and the various divisions and subdivisions of the modernist schools are fairly well represented, together with a group of at least twenty members of the of the National Academy. [54]

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[52] "Society of Independents Exhibit their Paintings," New York Times, 8 April, 1917
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid.

In the same issue of Touchstone, Robert Henri's article, "The 'Big Exhibition', the Artist and the Public,"[55] specifically criticized the Society of Independent Artists for having dispensed with a hanging jury and called the alphabetical system a disaster:

> In the nineteen hundred and seventeen Salon of New York the directors of the society, with the best of intentions, but in my opinion with little foresight, devised the scheme of doing away with the hanging jury and putting in its stead the plan of hanging the pictures according to the names of the artists, alphabetically, and the result, as might have been expected, was a disastrous hodgepodge. If we resent dictation from a jury why would we not resent dictation from an alphabet?....The principle of free exhibition demands for the artist freedom from the senseless alphabet as well as from the jury. The artist should exercise *his* judgement and *his* taste in the making of the picture, should be the one to determine when it is ready for the public, and just as possible should choose the manner of its presentation; how it should be hung and in what company.[56]

Furthermore, Henri believed that the 'big show' concept perpetuated academic elitism, and thus he called for persistent small group shows presented throughout the year:

> I believe in absolute freedom for the artist in exhibiting his pictures. Not only freedom in selecting pictures for an exhibition, but freedom in hanging pictures for an exhibition. I have worked for this freedom with other artists for the last seventeen years and have desired to see establish in New York a great forum conducted in such manner as to clear the way and make free the exposition of all movements and developments in the arts and the crafts.... The principle of free exhibition demands for the artist freedom from the senseless alphabet as well as from the jury. The artist should exercise *his* judgement and *his* taste in the making of the picture, should be the one to determine when it is ready for the public, and just as possible should choose the manner of its presentation; how it should be hung and in what company....Art should not be segregated to a certain six weeks in the year. Art should be persistent; exhibitions should be small. Every one enjoys Fifth Avenue, because there a series of very small exhibitions occur in the dealers galleries. We enjoy them all, for they are not beyond our endurance and because they are divided into groups, a group in each gallery; we are thus enabled to see more and enjoy more than were they smashed together in one hodgepodge.

Finally, it must be stated that Robert Henri was so strongly against the final installation of the exhibition that he tendered his resignation from the Society just before the exhibition opened.[57]

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[55] Robert Henri, " The 'Big Exhibition', the Artist and the Public" Touchstone, vol. 1 July 1917): 174 - 177

[56] Ibid., 175

[57] Robert Henri would later relent by sending paintings to the Society from 1919 until his death

In the July 1917 issue of Touchstone an article was published on George Bellows' various thoughts about art as a tool for democracy, in the essay titled "The Big Idea: George Bellows Talks about Patriotism for Beauty."[58] Bellows began by stating that as a human being as well as an artist, he was deeply interested in making sure the world was free from autocracy, and believed that war was a means to freedom and democracy:

> I would go to war for an ideal – far more easily than I could for a country. Democracy is an idea to me, is the Big Idea. I cannot believe that democracy can be dropped out of existence because of the purpose of one or of many nations. I have been called a revolutionist – if I am, I don't know it. First of all I am a painter, and a painter gets hold of life – gets hold of something real, of many real things. That makes him think, and if he thinks out loud he is called a revolutionist…I am deeply interested in real life. I want to see it, I want to paint it, and God knows I do not want to destroy it. But there you are. If you think, you see democracy looming large for the whole world; France is great because she is living it, Russia is great because she is starting it. If you think, you know democracy has got to win – not in this nation or in that nation, but freedom for the whole world.[59]

Bellows continued his arguments by stating that artists needed absolute freedom to express what they saw, thus being able to use their imaginations to create their artworks:

> I have always felt about art, that it was freedom that counted. A man must see things and say things his own way. This is his new imagination…And I want to use mine for the things I see – The Hudson, The Skyscrapers, The Sea at Monhegan, Ship-Building at Gloucester, I see wonder where the young immigrants play in the green river parks at night….As a student I was always eager to do the tremendous, vital things that pressed all about me. It seems to me that an artist must be a spectator of life; a reverential, enthusiastic, emotional spectator, and then the great dramas of human nature will surge through his mind. As a student I was always eager to do the tremendous, vital things that pressed all about me. It seems to me that an artist must be a spectator of life; a reverential, enthusiastic, emotional spectator, and then the great dramas of human nature will surge through his mind."[60]

According to Bellows, there was only one recipe for being a good painter: "There are only three things demanded of a painter; to see things, to feel them and to dope them out for the public. You can learn more in painting one street scene than in six month's work in an atelier.

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[58] George Bellows, "The Big Idea: George Bellows Talks About Patriotism for Beauty" Touchstone, vol. 1 (July 1917): 269 – 275
[59] Ibid., 269
[60] Ibid., 269, 275

My advice is to paint just as soon as you have the confidence to...watch all good art, and accept none as a standard for yourself. Think with all the world, and work alone."[61] Finally, the works that were chosen to illustrate the essay were two paintings of his daughters; *Jean*[62] and *Anne,* both dating 1917.

Mary Fanton Roberts and her writings on other artists

Fanton wrote articles on various American and European artists in Touchstone, using Robert Henri's 'Art for Life Sake' theory to critique artists of different art movements and orientations, from those who experimented with more progressive tendencies to artists who remained more conservative.

As befitting the times, Mary Fanton Roberts wrote two articles on artists who fought as well as painted scenes in the trenches of World War I. The first article entitled, "Steinlen, The Artist of French Democracy,"[63] focused on the works depicting the war by the Swiss-born French artist Théophile Alexandre Steinlen (1859–1923) on display at the Arden Galleries in January 1919. Steinlen was best known as an illustrator who worked for the French journals Mirliton, Assiette au Beurre (1901-1912), and for producing hundreds of lithographs for the popular 19th century cabaret called Chat Noir in the bohemian Montmarte district of Paris. The New York Times art critic Elizabeth Luther Cary wrote a brief paragraph about this exhibition, stating that Steinlen: "turns with a noble gesture to his war cartoons, the most impassioned, convincing, and artistically just that have come to France."[64] Fanton also examined his work and, like Cary, described the artist as a man of intense feeling and courage. She began her essay by stating that Steinlen's inspiration stemmed from a spiritual quest to describe how the human soul could rise above the most tragic and lamentable physical surroundings, like the

[61] Ibid.
[62] Figure 22
[63] Mary Fanton Roberts, "Steinlen, The Artist of French Democracy" Touchstone, vol. 4 (January 1919): 292 – 299
[64] "Art Notes," New York Times, 18 January, 1919

horrors of World War I: "the fundamental basis of Steinlen's inspiration is pity, an indifferent understanding, an infinite commiseration for the world, expressed with gravity and strength, absolutely without sentimentality, but with every shade of tenderness and delicacy."[65] She continued:

> In a spirit like Steinlen, an intelligence directed by the heart, it is not necessary to pass in his work from the social to the war life. To him, there is no difference; the social attributes including love, sorrow, the death of mankind, the birth of children all figures in his art of the trenches, the purely military display had not interested him. What he knows, is the man leaving for the Front kissing his wife and children good-bye at the little stations, the silent sorrow of the wife that leaves him; the group of people who has returned to desolated towns and stop before a mass of rock and cement and say with full courage to each other 'This is our home'...He is not merely describing war in his sketches and etchings, he is describing the beauty that the human soul can rise to under the most tragic and lamentable physical surroundings....It is a relief to turn to Steinlen's 'Singing Victory,' which we have shown among the illustrations of this article. It is men who have wrought the victory, who are singing, and the figure who welcomes them is a symbolism of France with wings springing up to Heaven. It carries a wonderful rhythm and strength and beauty, also ferocious joy. It is the singing of men who know what defeat would have meant to the nation. [66]

Fanton sprinkled her articles with small sketches by Steinlen, mainly pictures of soldiers and refugees, and also included two of his drawings; *Singing Victory*[67] and *At the Station*, both undated. Finally, she called him the artist of French democracy since she believed that he looked to the people in his art for spiritual power:

> In page after page of Steinlen's sketches of the war you see few cannons, few trenches, few guns, few decorations, and yet the artist has lived at The Front and knows every detail of modern warfare. But what he has watched has been men rather than soldiers, women and children rather than fighting. He wants us to see with him the pathos, the sadness, the infinite desolation that these people have endured for the sake of their ideal, an ideal so stupendous that it consoles not only the men fighting and dying at The Front, but the women suffering and dying at home....[68]

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[65] Ibid., 292
[66] Ibid., 293, 299
[67] Figure 23
[68] Ibid., 299

The other essay written by Mary Fanton Roberts on a war artist is entitled "Jean-Julien Lemordant, France's Great Soldier-Artist,"[69] She introduced Lemordant (1878–1968), whose work was then on display at the Gimpel Wildenstein Galleries on Fifth Avenue, describing him as a heroic artist-soldier who, through the turmoil of the war, found and incorporated truth about democracy into his art:

> Anything more remote from the horror in some parts of Europe, the horror that is tricking the stricken world by the misuse of the words Freedom and Liberty, that talks democracy and practises slavery, that asks the good-will of women, and strives do destroy the home life of a whole nation – anything more remote from this than the Lemordant pictures it would be impossible to imagine. Perhaps all unconsciously, this heroic French artist-soldier has found the truth about democracy, and he tells it to us with lightning strokes and splendid color. In all of his pictures he is a painter of the simple people, of the workmen, the peasants, the sailors the fisher men and women. And the paints them working joyously with strength and exhilaration and interest. He paints them running in the meadows and dancing in the shore and laughing into each other's faces. He paints them as great workmen, great lovers. They seem, these men and women, in their bright-coloured clothes and their vivid faces, as much a part of the windy day, as the amethyst water through which the women splash bringing in the nets; they are as genuine as the yellow shore where the brilliant fishing boats lie, as the poppies in the field and the tulips in the home gardens.[70]

Fanton painted Lemordant as a hero of liberty and freedom. Born in St-Malo, he grew up in Brittany, and eventually studied painting in Paris at the École des Beaux-Arts. At the outset of World War I, Lemordant volunteered and was sent to the front as a private. He was wounded twice, once in 1914 and again in 1915, leaving him blind. Furthermore, he was taken as a prisoner to Germany in 1915, but eventually was released. To highlight these courageous events, Fanton used most of her essay to describe Lemordant's heroism and personality; in fact, this essay did not actually analyze any of the artist's work as she was mainly concerned with his acts of bravery. As seen with the above citation, the first part of this essay was a brief description of his subject-matter, while the major topic of the essay was a story by French publisher and writer Charles Le Goffic (1863-1932) which chronicled the horrors of the

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[69] Mary Fanton Roberts, "Jean Julien Lemordant, Frances Great Soldier-Artist" Touchstone, vol.5 (June 1919): 190-200

[70] Ibid., 190

trenches. As an introduction to Le Goffic's text, Fanton described how she felt when meeting Lemordant for the first time:

> I have never seen a more tragic reminder of the world war with Germany than this blind artist in the midst of the glory of his created work. I had the great honour of being presented to him, and he spoke very quietly and very beautifully of France and America, and of what France had done for the world in beating back the German horde, though he did not say horde, he just said 'Germans.' And then he said beautiful things of America, of our coming at the necessary moment to save France, and of the love of the two countries, as though out of the most terrible disaster the world has ever known, this great love was an exquisite emanation. Lemordant's voice is never loud and not often intense, except when he tells you of the bravery of the French poilu, of what his own men did, of what they suffered and of their extraordinary spirituality, their conquest of self, and their offering of their very souls to France....It was very hard to talk to Lemordant, because I saw a man who had forgotten everything he has ever suffered, while I felt so profoundly what he had sacrificed and lost that I was literally in tears before him

Two illustrations of Lemordant's art work complimented the essay: *A Charcoal Sketch of Bretons Dancer* and *Young Woman of Daoulas,* also known as *La Marseillaise,*[71] which Fanton described thusly: "A single line in one drawing, from the fingertip at the top of the page to the poised dancing foot at the lower margin, was drawn with a vitality and sureness and intense delight that made you know the title of the picture was 'La Marseillaise.' There was music in the drawing, the music of victory."[72]

Elizabeth Luther Cary of the New York Times also wrote an article on Lemordant's exhibition at the Gimpel Wildenstein Galleries. When examining his works, Cary made observations similar to those of Fanton. For instance, when discussing his paintings portraying French peasants, Cary stated that:

> Whatever the beauty of these wind-buffeted peasants may have been it is not their beauty that he has striven to preserve in the big vigorous studies he makes of them. It is, first of all their strength, the tremendous physical power born of battle with the elements and exposure to hardship. It shows in their play as clearly as in their work and in the girls and women as much as in the men. The artist has watched his models in their natural environment in every position of strain and conflict and muscular effort; he has seen them carrying their dead comrades home from the wrecked ships or helping the exhausted survivors towards shelter. He has seen them at work on the oyster's beds

[71] Figure 24
[72] Ibid., 190. There is no other information on these sketches besides the titles of the artwork.

> or carrying the nets or pulling cable or carrying a mast. He has seen them dancing and praying and mourning.[73]

Cary's description of Lemordant's subjects resembled closely Fanton's characterization of the joyous, hardworking, real and vigorous peasants. But, in sharp contrast, Cary examined the technical style of the artist, describing how he created his figure with a combination of curved lines and simple color, details that Fanton omitted completely from her essay.

If democracy and freedom dominated Mary Fanton Roberts writings on war artists, she also published four articles where her central concern was the artist's color, form and/or artist's technique. In the first article titled "The Great Russia put on Canvas: Illustrated by the Paintings of Boris Anisfeld,"[74] she analysed the paintings of one of Russia's most prominent artists, Boris Anisfeld (1879–1973). She provided a brief biography, cited his association with the Ballet Russes, and stated that his works had been on display at the Brooklyn Museum in 1918. She begins her article by dramatically expressing how quintessentially Russian Anisfeld was: "Anisfeld is Russia. No other nation known in history could have produced him. Russia with her wide frozen north, with her flaring heat, her scintillating brain, her undisciplined emotion, her suffering, her rebellious release from suffering, her torture, her wild response to nature, these things are all in Boris Anifeld's paintings, in his subject, in his design, in his color."[75] Although the illustrations in Touchstone were in black and white, the element that interested Fanton the most in Anisfeld's work was his use of color, most especially how he used a bright palette to create the underlying design in his work. She praised the artist for his courageous technique by stating that:

> [Anisfeld] gives you the impression that he has swept past his canvas with his great glowing palette as though riding on the wind. He has painted with the vision and the freedom of some painter among the gods, sometimes scarcely stopping to enunciate what he has to say. This, however, is only sometimes for there are paintings of his so

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[73] "Paintings by Jean-Julien Lemordant," New York Times, 23 March, 1919
[74] Mary Fanton Roberts, "The Great Russia put on Canvas: Illustrated by the Paintings of Boris Anisfeld" Touchstone, vol.4 (February 1919): 386-393
[75] Ibid,.386

> exquisitely elucidated that they are like delicate silver poems, like the wood wind instruments of an orchestra[76]

She also allowed the artist to explain how he created a work of art, and how he saw color in his design: "I will always see a thing first in color. It comes to me as a fairly complete conception, and I rarely have to alter the essential character of any of my initial impressions...With me art is a matter of feeling, and I paint, as a rule, that which I feel, not that which I see."[77] Despite certain reservations, Fanton was highly supportive of his first solo exhibition in the United States:

> Although one feels a lack of control in Anisfeld's use of color, his exciting piling up of contrasting hues, yet, with close enough study and understanding there is never failing design in every picture an outline that is intentional, a form that is wise and gracious, an adjustment of color to form, and form to space that only the man who has been profoundly into art and who touches it with reverent fingers could devise. In other words there is a big plan back and under his work, there is his intention and organization for every canvas, and to this is added the rainbow gift, the free and burning technic, and there seems to be no limit to his gay delight in color.[78]

Fanton illustrated her article with two paintings by Anisfeld but did not mention nor examine them; the first is titled *Alder Grove*[79] 1907, which depicted an area near the city of Tver (now Kalinin), and the second was *The Garden of the Hesperides,* dating from 1914-1916. *Alder Grove* typified Fanton's opinions about Anisfeld's color palette since it demonstrated well his penchant for complementary colors. In it, the red-green pair predominates; red in the pond, green in the foliage. A second pair was created by the blue sky and by the golden touches of sunlight. The brushstrokes, although varied, relied heavily on quasi-pointillist dabs.[80] Among published comments on Anisfeld's work, most critics of the day felt that *Alder Grove* blended representational painting with dabs of abstraction. One reviewer for American Art News wrote that "'The Alder Grove', in spite of its conscious patterning, trembles and shimmers with the lovely character of the tree...[Anisfeld] takes great transports in color, less liberty with

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[76] Ibid., 387
[77] Ibid., 388
[78] Ibid., 388
[79] Figure 25
[80] Roger J. Mesley, Boris Anisfeld: "Fantast-Mystic" (Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, 1989): 32

drawing, but the whole is always harmonious and inherently harmless. Nothing could be safer and saner that his happy landscapes [such as] Alder Grove."[81]

Another article by Fanton concerned with specific painterly technique was entitled "Higgins: A Painter of the Shadow-World,"[82] and discussed the works of American artist Eugene Higgins (1874–1958) whose artworks were on display at the Mussmann Galleries in the autumn of 1919. Although Higgins had been in Paris for a time, Fanton believed he had retained his American originality and technique:

> I found...that Eugene Higgins had lived in Paris for seven years, and had studied with an amazing list of conventional teachers, Julian, Jean Paul Lurant, Gérôme, and at the Beaux-Arts. And I wondered how a man could have passed through such a denaturing process in instruction without losing every spark of expression in mind and manner. But, somehow, Higgins had kept his originality, a violent, decisive one, as definitely as though he had never left St-Louis, where he was born, or as though the group of popular French art schools had never existed.[83]

Fanton focused on Higgins' studies done in Paris, and noted that he was more interested in depicting the tragedy of life in Paris than the gay city that most artists went there to seek: "Mr. Higgins sees the sorrow of the world with the keenest sympathy, with a searching understanding of the profound beauty of tragedy. His canvases are...usually sombre, but sometimes illuminated with touches of color of a richness only to be described through our memory of Rembrandt."[84] When describing an undated painting by the artist titled *Jews in Poland,*[85] Fanton wrote: "There is also a study of refugées called 'Jew in Poland' and these suffering people, finding comfort and relief only in affection and comradeship, might be anywhere in Russia or Belgium or Armenia. It is a group of universal suffering, or any family mourning for a lost home, of any dispossessed people sorrowing for old living contacts."[86] In other words, instead of critiquing Higgins work, Fanton tried to describe the poetic nuances in

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[81] 'Boris Anifeld's Art, American Art News, Vol. 26 (October 1918):1-2
[82] Mary Fanton Roberts, " Higgins: A Painter of the Shadow-World" Touchstone, vol.5 (Sept 1919): 360-369
[83] Ibid., 360
[84] Ibid., 363
[85] Figure 26
[86] Ibid., 368

his work and praised him by comparing Higgins to Rembrandt. Elizabeth Luther Cary of the New York Times had similar comments about Eugene Higgins' artistic corpus: "The pathetic fallacy is not so easy to manage in painting as in poetry and it is rare to find an artist who can be counted upon to paint the tears in things. In the exhibition by Eugene Higgins...picture after picture emphasizes a despairing mood and suggests something amounting to a recipe for the effect of sadness without the aid of incident."[87]

In the next of her articles focusing on color, titled "Vincent Van Gogh: The Supreme Colorist,"[88] Fanton chose to write a biographic and interpretive essay on Vincent Van Gogh. Like the essay on Boris Anisfeld, Fanton focused mainly on the artist's use of color, in addition to describing his friendship with Paul Gauguin. Furthermore, to create a more interesting article, Fanton added excerpts from letters Vincent Van Gogh wrote to Post-Impressionist painter Emile Bernard (1868-1941), detailing his ideas about the numerous color combinations found in nature. Fanton began her essay by explaining why she chose this subject:

> So little has been written in this country about Vincent Van Gogh that I am surprised to find, outside the artists, so definite and fresh and interested points of view of this man who had seemed to me to be known more as Gauguin's friend than as a separate, powerful, intense personality. Having found an unusually fine collection of photographs of Van Gogh's work, I felt confident that at least fifty percent of the readers of THE TOUCHSTONE would enjoy so rare a glimpse of this man's work and would like also to refresh their memories about one of the most vivid, remarkable, individualistic personalities of the nineteenth century[89]

She described him as a revolutionary of his time, a man of, "violent temperament, who plunged into new expressions, new interests most vehemently. Existing conditions no more carried the slightest weight in him than traditions did. He saw straight to the heart of all inspiration." She continued: "He was a man to do, not to discuss. He wanted truth about life, about all presentation of life. He had the most intense friendships, the most burning hatreds,

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[87] "Art Notes," New York Times, 4 December, 1919
[88] Mary Fanton Roberts, "Vincent Van Gogh: The Supreme Colorist" Touchstone, vol.7 (April 1920 – Sept 1920): 355-365
[89] Ibid., 355

and it is said that at one time he even attempted the life of Gauguin whom he loved more than all human beings."[90] Van Gogh's friendship with Paul Gauguin was referenced many times. Fanton confirmed that the two supported and influenced each other: "One sometimes wonders just what Van Gogh's outlook would have been without his friendship for and intense love of Gauguin. He so desired to have this friend come Arles and pose for a portrait, and when it was found at last that Gauguin was too ill Van Gogh wrote Bernard: 'I am so anxious about the journey here for Gauguin. I want him to come, but fear the trip.'"[91] However, the main point in Fanton's essay was Van Gogh's ideas on color in his paintings, which he discussed in his letters to Emile Bernard:

> I let my mind wander in distractions....But again Nature enchants me, and again I find myself face to face with a blank wall, and I set myself to battle with Nature body to body....Sometimes the earth and the foliage are violently interlaced against the yellow sky. Again I find the earth orange and the sky a rose-green. And these things interest me more than all the philosophy in the world. At time I feel myself saturated with the air of the little mountains here, with the life of the shepherds and I see Life truly. And my ambitions grow to become a part of the earth, of the wheat, the flowers, of the olive trees, that bloom – to make the live on my canvases. And I can tell you it is not easy to do.[92]

A further example of Van Gogh's opinions on nature's color palette was in a letter that he wrote to Gauguin in which he explained what would become one of his most famous paintings:

> I am decorating my bedroom. I shall make an enormous canvas and all the furniture will be in white wood. It will amuse me very much to make this interior practically out of nothing. I shall have flat tints with simple outline. The walls pale lilac, with the faded sunlight over them: the pillow and bed covering a pale greenish lemon yellow: the draperies blood red; the toilet table orange covered with blue linen and the window hanging green. I intend to express absolute repose in this combination of colors.[93]

Fanton illustrated her essay with paintings by the artist, such as *Peasants Resting at Noontime* dating 1889 and a *Portrait of Doctor Cachet*[94] dating 1890. But she did not analyse these paintings, nor any other in the article. In her concluding remarks, Fanton wrote that artists like

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[90] Ibid., 356
[91] Ibid., 364
[92] Ibid., 361
[93] Ibid., 361-362
[94] Figure 27. Fanton made an error in her essay and stated this was a self-portrait of Van Gogh.

Van Gogh were indispensable since they understand and paint what they see in life: "We watch the worth of artists like [Van Gogh] because we trust that through their art they will manifest the greater development of the race. For those who truly understand the laws of Nature, construct according to their knowledge, and knowing Nature and constructing thus they create with power and sureness. They are sympathetic to all life."[95]

The article titled, "Rare and Beautiful Art of Mary Rogers,"[96] presented the work of Mary Rogers (1882-1920), on display at the 1921 Society of Independent Artists exhibition, held at the Waldorf-Astoria hotel. The society, of which Rogers had been a founding member and also a director, honoured her life and relatively short career by displaying a memorial exhibition of her work in a room during its annual show.[97] In Fanton's essay, she applauded this her oeuvre which had included portraits, landscapes, studies from life and sketches. Fanton described Roger's work as "more real, more living, more encompassing than the roar of the great city's street or even the flood of light which poured down over the moving throngs...[her work] is wholly imaginative, but each one a full rich expression of some intense interest in people or nature or in new and curious technique."[98] The two undated paintings that Fanton presented in the article were *Flower Study* and *The Dancers*[99]; she felt that these were perfect illustrations of the diversity of Rogers' approach:

> I felt her diversity as most extraordinary. She had no one technique, ancient or modern; but many methods that captured her impulse of the moment, She chose from those who had gone before her, or living to-day as she wished. In one painting she was impressionistic; in the next simple and vivid as Van Gogh or Gauguin; again excessively the modernist especially in the painting of *The Dancers* which illustrate this article. Following the canvas of *The Dancers* came a study that was cubist in color and form, and after that a glorious still-life of flowers, that carried a hint of Rédon, but richer in conception and freer in handling.[100]

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[95] Ibid., 365
[96] Mary Fanton Roberts, "Rare and Beautiful Art of Mary Rogers," Touchstone, vol.8, (Oct 1920 – March1921): 370-373
[97] "Art Exhibition of Paintings," New York Times, 13 February 1921
[98] Ibid., 370
[99] Figure 28
[100] Roberts, "Rare and Beautiful Art of Mary Rogers," 373

Fanton characterized the artist as someone who was receptive to all the world's inspiration and felt her work to be fresh, original and intensely personal. Interestingly enough, Catherine Rogers, Mary Rogers' sister, wrote a thank you note to Fanton on 8 February 1921:

> How can I ever tell you dear Mrs. Roberts what your beautiful article has meant to mother and me, and to everyone who has read it. I feel that you have sensed her personality more accurately than many who knew her. I just do want to thank you, and to tell you that the little watercolour that you liked so much - the red tree – is yours with mothers and my dearest love. Yours truly, Catherine Rogers.[101]

The New York Times also wrote an essay on Mary Rogers' memorial exhibition at the Society of Independent Artists. As opposed to Fanton, who focused on the late artist's visual production, the newspaper quoted Robert Henri, who defended the value of the Society for artists like Mary Rogers:

> It seems to me that artists who, like Mary Rogers, work more or less in obscurity, struggling with practically no encouragement and with many discouragements which come from sending pictures to the regular exhibitions and having them returned, are the people who make the world go forward, and it is a pity that we are not more able to see their work as they are producing it – that we have no better facilities for seeing the work of such artists, giving the moral, if not financial, support which they need. This is, of course, the peculiar value of the Society of Independent Artists. With all the splendid motives of the Society, in its present limited space it is impossible for it to give more than a mere fragmentary exhibition of any artists work, and it is desirable that better facilities be established so that we may not miss the beautiful things as they pass. It is well that we do and are anxious to recognize the value of the work of the artist after his death, but it would be much better for us if we were keener in our search and more ready to give opportunity for expression to the living.[102]

Rogers therein is reduced to an argument, not the forceful figure inscribed by Fanton.

The final article written by Fanton that discussed a painter's technique is entitled "Carrière, the Mystic."[103] She presented a few paintings by Eugene Carrière (1849 – 1906), the French Symbolist painter best known for his monochrome palette. As with the other essay's on individual artists, Fanton presented background information on the artist's life and career, and

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[101] MFRP/AAA D162
[102] "Art Exhibition of Paintings," New York Times, 13 February 1921
[103] Mary Fanton Roberts, "Carrière, the Mystic" Touchstone, vol.5 (July 1919): 384-413

interpreted his works portraying Madonna-type mothers with their children. She begins her essay by explaining the reason why she chose to write about this artist in Touchstone:

> In the springtime before the War I was in Paris visiting a very beautiful and wonderful woman who had gone through the agony of losing both her children through a terrible accident. In the room where she spent most of her time, after the death of her beautiful babies, were several paintings of Carrière's, one of which was a marvellous depiction of a mother's love so intense that it was reaching down past the bars of Heaven to comfort her little children. My friend told me that this picture had brought her the only comfort that she had found after her children had been swept away, and that she spent hours at night before the canvas feeling that the mother and children were real and that her own children were about her. And I could understand her feelings as I looked at the beautiful mother face yearning back to her earthly children were about her, the very gesture of the shadowy hands so drenched with affection and tenderness that it seemed almost wholly a picture of emotion exhaling a loveliness not of this earth.

In regards to his paintings depicting mother and children, such as the two that were illustrated in the essay, *A Study of Love* and *A Young Child*[104] both dating 1899, Fanton described the artist as searching for:

> the realization of some spiritual quality in humanity and that his delight was to bring this beauty through his medium out to the wider audience of the world. He loved all tenderness and beautiful things and was horrified with cruelty and injustice. At times so desirous was he of presenting the wonder of love on his canvas that you have a feeling that the emotions he is seeking to portray are actually saturating the mediums he uses. It is as though his paint were held as a transparent curtain for the greatest power in the world – Love – to pour through. In looking long at one of Carrière's canvases you forget the symbols that he uses for these great human characteristics and you feel only the watchful care of the mother, the helplessness and affection of the little children. Whatever Carrière's method, he succeeds in making his audience repeat the feeling he experienced in painting the canvas. He must have loved life very profoundly and very sympathetically to have care so much for the spirituality of men and women and to have captured it so richly.

Again, Fanton preferred to give a brief biography of Carrière's life and artistic evolution, and discussed the way he presented the emotions and experiences of life in his subject-matter. She ended the article my explaining that: "I think all those who love Carrière best remember most permanently and poignantly the spirit quality of his paintings, the efflorescence of his own soul's fullness that seems held to the canvas by an intangible unearthly quality."[105]

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[104] Figure 29
[105] Ibid., 413

In conclusion, Touchstone presented a transition in the way Mary Fanton Roberts analyzed artist's works. With the introduction of avant-garde European art in 1913 in New York City and with the effects of World War I, there was also a shift in the way she wrote about art. She was no longer criticizing the mimetic tendencies in American art, nor denouncing the lack of a distinctive American style. Instead, she presented in her articles the artists who developed an art that was characteristically their own, artists who had enough individual expression to be able to transcribe it in their own art. In the first volume of Touchstone Mary Fanton set the tone of the journal by advising that she would be interested in all types of art that expressed freshness, individuality and originality. When critiquing artist's works in Touchstone, she focused on how the artists expressed their life experience in their works of art. More specifically, her critical discourse remained within the 'Art for Life Sake' viewpoint, where art was always linked to the artist's life and experiences. In this way, she was able to remain positive when reviewing an artist's exhibition. For instance, while discussing Vincent Van Gogh's use of color, she tied his approach topainting to his passion to life by determining that Van Gogh was interested in seeing his life's experiences through color and design. Finally, one can posit that Fanton believed that art was not simply about formal concerns, but was a way for the artist to communicate his/her intellect and emotions in order to achieve a living history in his or her works.

Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to present the ideas discussed by editor and art critic Mary Fanton Roberts in the two journals she was associated with between 1905-1921; Craftsman (1905-1916) and Touchstone (1917-1921). The main objective was to analyse her articles on the visual arts with the intent of presenting her changing views and theories about not only American nationalism in art but also about individual artists practicing during the first two decades of the 20th century. Such a study is long overdue, as her writing on visual arts have, in scholarship, been overshadowed by her work on the decorative arts.[1]

Having analyzed her considerable written contributions to art criticism, one can conclude that unlike some of her peers - critics such as James Gibbons Huneker and Royal Cortissoz - Mary Fanton Roberts was not an original thinker in the sense of having carved out a thoroughly consistent and implacable position. More specifically, she avoided the extremist camps of progressivism and conservatism by rejecting absolute or exclusive theories, choosing instead to become an avowed moderate. She did this by relying on how the artists described their own art – that is, she was appreciative of the artists' own opinions and chose to see their art as a living history. This was clearly evident in her relationships with Robert Henri and the Eight, but manifested itself with other artists. Frederic Remington wrote to Fanton in the early 1900's, giving her permission to interpret his works in her article: "If you are going to write about me, I think it is much better for you to say it your way and never mind my gabfest in the least. It's the work that counts and I believe that people who are doing things (my things) should at least admit them - the American people hate anyone who talks about themselves..."[2] In another undated letter, Remington praised an article Fanton wrote on him that she was about to publish: "Your young woman gave me the draft which I read and I find it very much

[1] Even in respect to her decorative arts writing she has had uneven treatment at times. Mary Fanton was left out of an important book about the Craftsman journal, by Barry Sanders and titled The Craftsman, An Anthology. (Santa Barbara: Peregrine Smith, Inc. 1978): the author entirely ignored Fanton when discussing the editor and journalists on staff, and stated that her writings belonged to Gustav Stickley.

[2] MFRP/AAA, reel D163

all right: A very good statement of all my trials and triumphs – the best statement of actualities I have seen as yet...."[3] As has been established, Fanton never hid which artists she befriended or admired most, and was always open about her personal agenda; her affection towards not only Robert Henri and the Eight, but also Remington, Gutzon Borglum, and Alfred Stieglitz, was clearly manifest in the articles that were published in her periodicals (and confirmed in the letters which are found in Fanton's personal papers at the Archives of American Art.) However, she also did not hesitate to depart from their opinions when she thought it wise, when it suited her own moderation.

As was seen with both periodicals, Fanton almost always provided the reader with a biographical account of the artist's life, and generally discussed what inspired the artist to create the work, yet she rarely supplied a detailed formal analysis of his or her production. Rare were the occasions that she would address in any substantial way the works that were illustrated in her articles; frequently, she would not even illustrate the works that were mentioned in her texts. Perhaps Fanton assumed that the reader would have either seen the objects mentioned, or that they would eventually go see the exhibition that she discussed. One can also posit that her periodicals were for a more diverse readership than art connoisseurs. The way she spoke of the artists and their work reflect more of an interest in the artist's life than with the actual art works, a style that would interest a broader audience than that composed of art lovers. However, we must also take into account the issue of her training; although much about her formative years is still unknown, one can surmise that she was probably not equipped formally to discuss more technical and formal aspects of art. Fanton might have received some art training at the Female Academy of Albany, but one can assume that it was her connections to the artistic community were the primary factors in the formation of her ideas about art. For instance, her close association with Robert Henri and the Eight

[3] MFRP/AAA, reel D163

certainly helped define her evolving positions on nationalism in art, and the principle of 'Art for Life Sake.' Furthermore, the trip she took to Europe between 1904 - 1905 helped her assimilate and appreciate the arts of the past.

In conclusion, Mary Fanton Roberts was a prolific art critic during the first decades of the twentieth century. The main objective of this thesis was to introduce her contributions to two of the arts periodicals, Craftsman and Touchstone, in which she played a key role, in order to put her on the map as an art critic and to begin to give her opinions a voice today. With more time and resources, it would have been interesting to investigate her early years as a critic, since not much is know about her before her employment at Craftsman. Understanding her formative years, and analysing her work as editor for such magazines as Demorest Magazine, New Idea Woman's Magazine and Women's Home Companion might bring to light more about how her commitment to and ideas about the visual arts emerged and about how she developed her writing style, which was – as I hope this thesis has demonstrated – an extremely vibrant vehicle for her.

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Giles Edgerton, "The Younger American Painters: Are they Creating a National Art," vol.13 (February 1908): 512 – 532

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Giles Edgerton, "Pioneers in Modern American Art: A group of Men who Have Greatly Aided its Development," vol.14 (September 1908): 597 – 606

Giles Edgerton, "The Quality of Woman's Art Achievement: A Young Austrian Sculptor who Possesses both Masculine and Feminine Perception," vol. 15 (December 1908): 292-300

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Giles Edgerton, " Remington Frederic, Painter and Sculptor: A Pioneer in Distinctive American Art," vol.15 (March1909): 658-670

Giles Edgerton, "The Place of Photography Among the Arts: Its Progress as Revealed in the International Exhibition," vol. 16 (April 1909): 32-44

Giles Edgerton, "Wilhelm Funk: A painter of Personality," vol.16 (May 1909):160-167

Giles Edgerton, "American Painters of Outdoors: Their Rank and Success," vol.16 (June 1909): 275-282

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Mary Fanton Roberts, "Jean Julien Lemordant, Frances Great Soldier-Artist," vol.5 (June 1919): 190-200

Mary Fanton Roberts, "Carrière, the Mystic," vol.5 (July 1919): 384-413

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Mary Fanton Roberts, "Painting Real People is the Purpose of George Luks Art," vol.8 (October 1920): 32 – 38

Mary Fanton Roberts, "John Sloan: Etcher," vol.8 (December 1920): 224 -227

Mary Fanton Roberts, "Rare and Beautiful Art of Mary Rogers," vol.8, (Oct 1920 – March1921): 370-373

Annex 2
Selected table of contents from The Touchstone

THE TOUCHSTONE

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1 WEST FORTY-SEVENTH STREET, NEW YORK CITY

MARY FANTON ROBERTS, Editor — PARIS SINGER, Consulting Editor
ELOISE ROORBACH, Associate Editor and Garden Department
GEORGE E. FOWLER, Architect

VOLUME 7 — NUMBER 1

Contents for April 1920

All manuscripts sent to THE TOUCHSTONE for consideration must be accompanied by return postage. A stamped addressed envelope is the most satisfactory plan.
All changes of address should reach us on or before the twenty-fifth of the second month preceding the date of publication. For example, to change an address for July, word should be sent to us by April twenty-fifth. Subscribers should not fail to give their old address when requesting a change of address. Canadian postage, 50 cents extra. Foreign postage, $1.20 extra.

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Figure 1: Robert Henri. *Mary Fanton Roberts*. 1917. Oil on canvas. 81.28X66 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

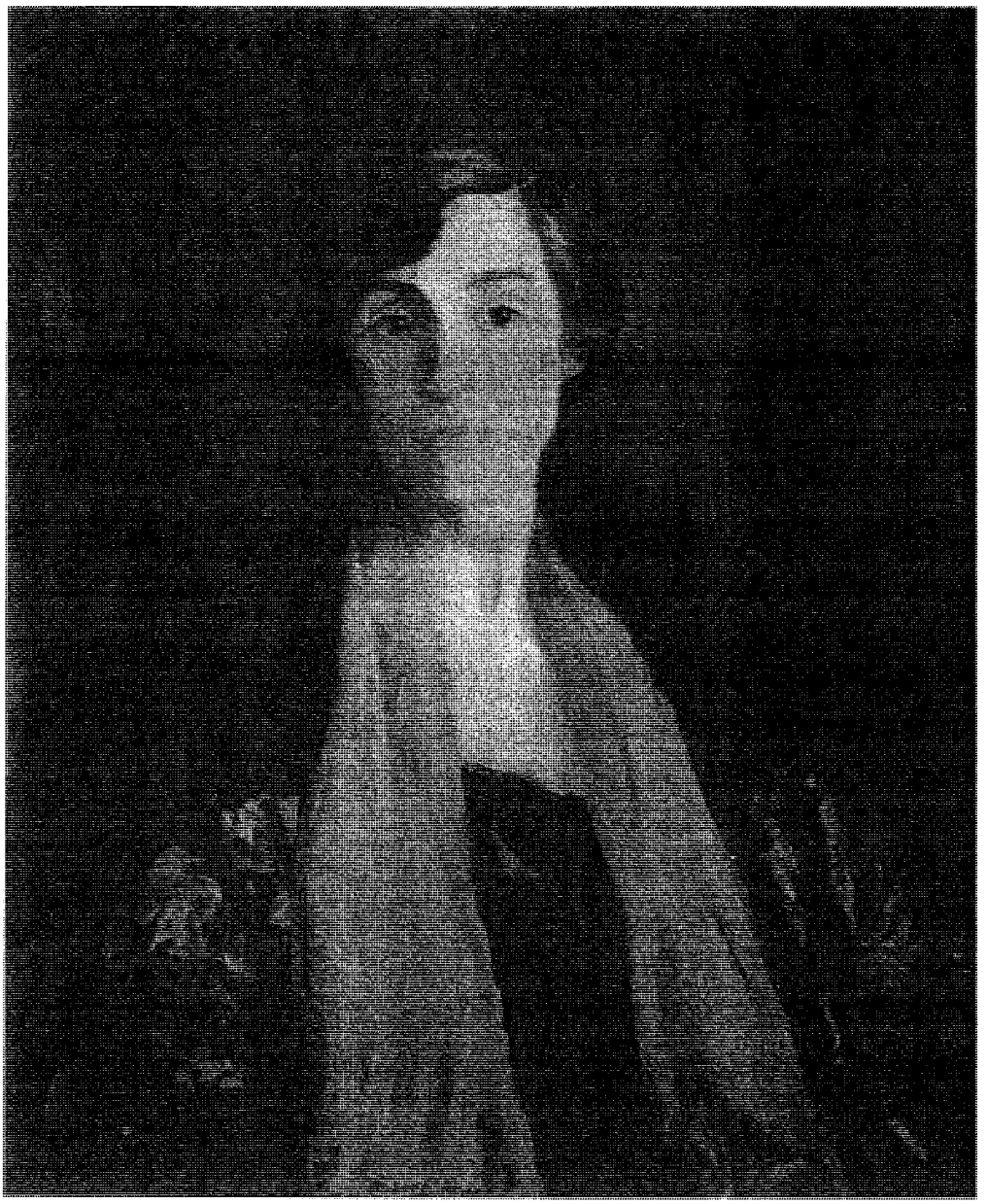

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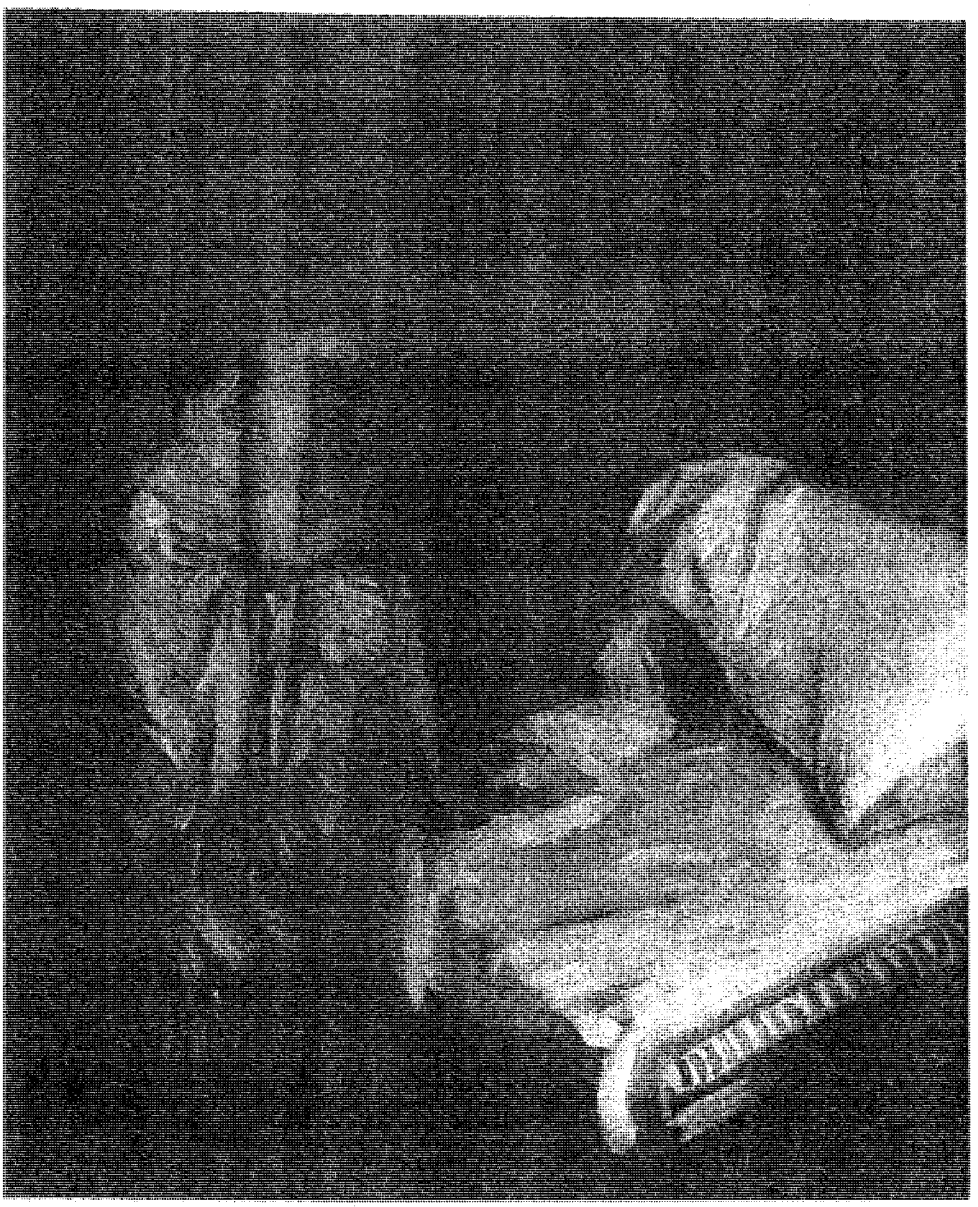
Figure 3: Robert Henri. *Dutch Soldier.* 1907. Oil on Canvas. 81.28X 66.04 cm. Munson-Williams-Proctor Art Institute, Utica, New York.

Figure 4: William Glackens. *The Shoppers*. 1907. Oil on canvas. 152.4X 152.4 cm. The Chrysler Museum, Norfolk, Virginia.

Figure 5: George Luks. *Mammy Groody*. Oil on canvas. 1908. 50.8X 40.64 cm. Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Figure 6: John Sloan. *The Cot*. 1907. Oil on canvas. 91.44X 76.2 cm. Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, Maine.



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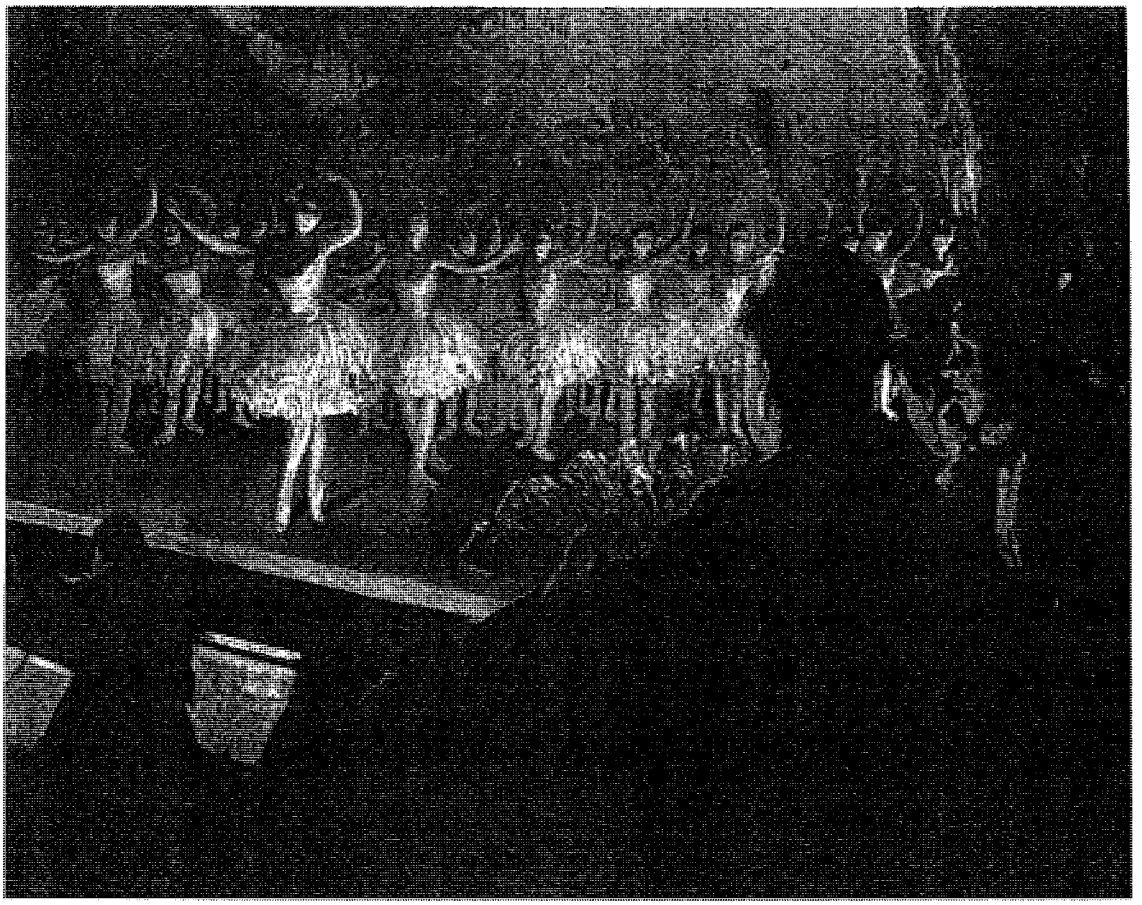

Figure 8: George Luks. The Pawnbroker's Daughter. 1905. Whereabouts unknown.

Figure 9: Gertrude Kasëbier. *Blessed Art Thou Among Women*. 1899. Platinum print. 23X13.2 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Stieglitz collection.

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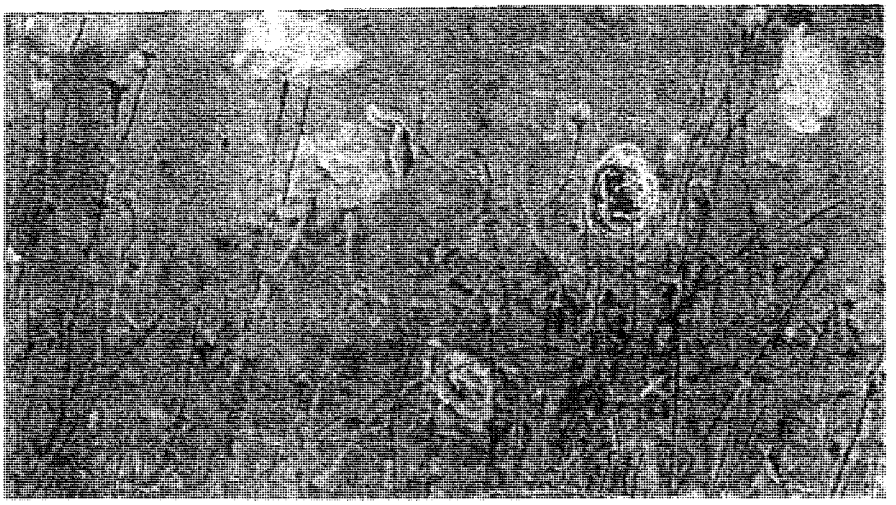

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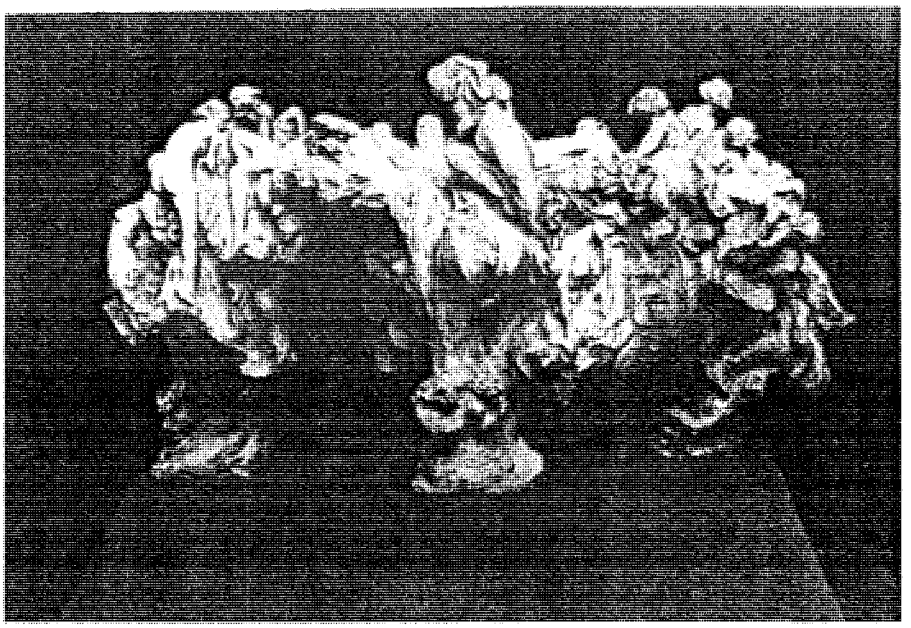

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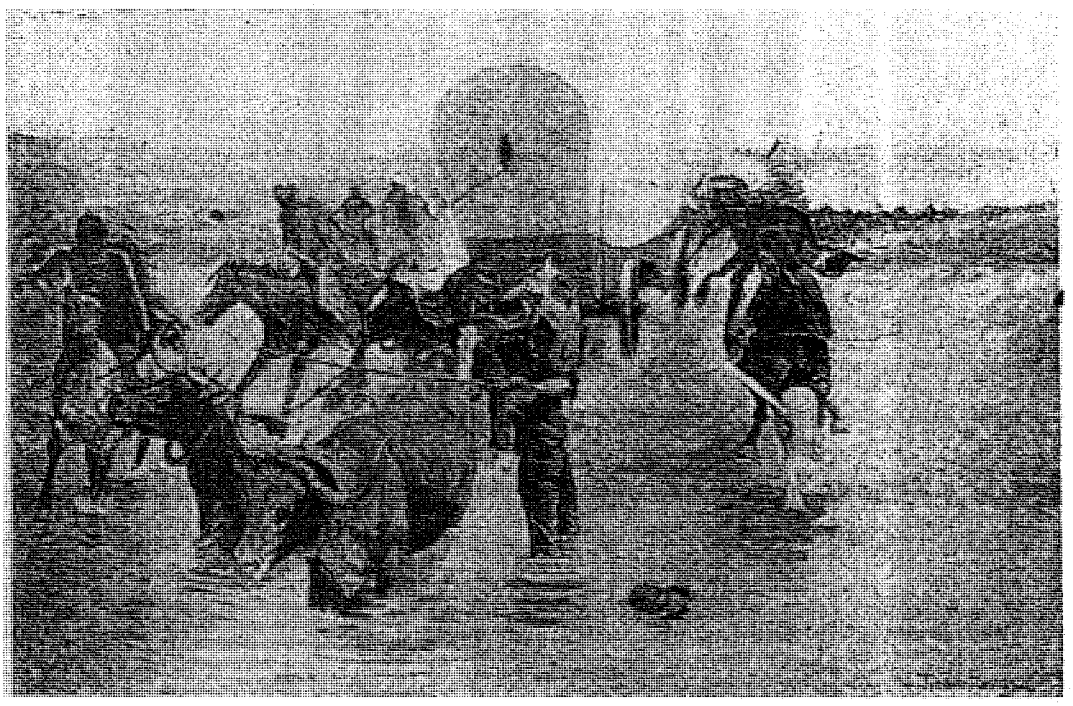

Figure 15: Wilhelm Funk. *La Petite Angéline.* Undated. Whereabouts unknown.

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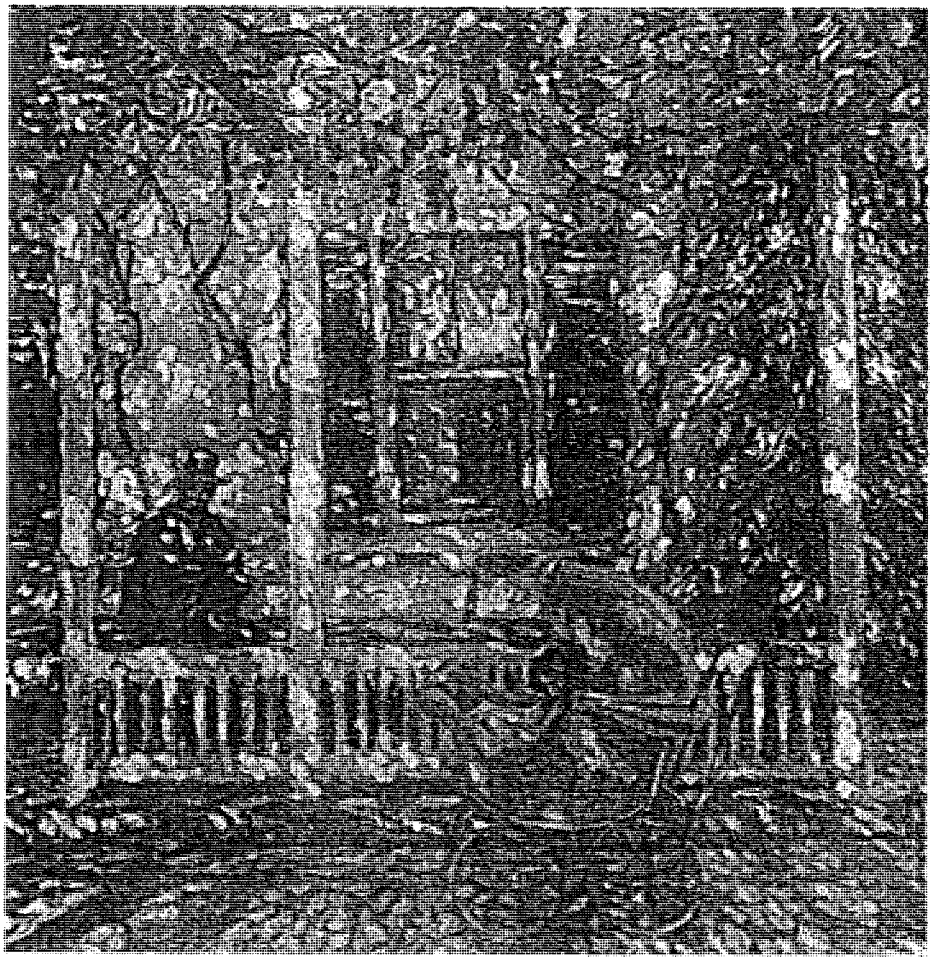

Figure 21: George Mather Richards. *Grieg*. Undated. Whereabouts unkown.

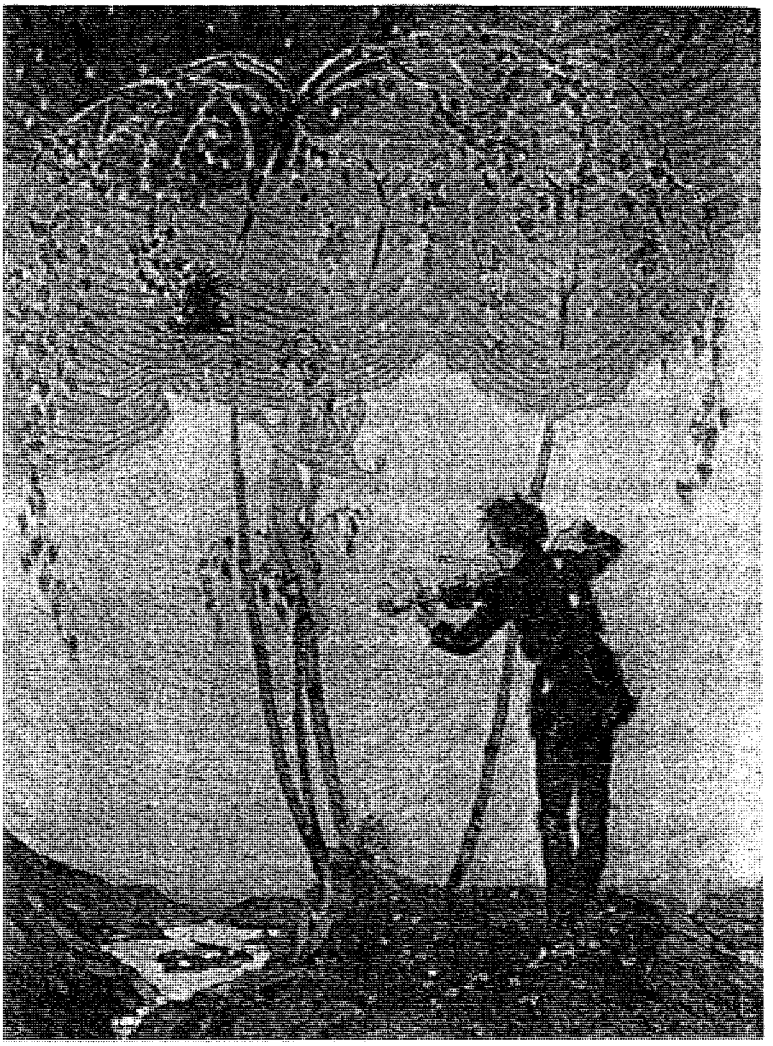

Figure 22: George Bellows. *Jean*. 1917. Private collection.

Figure 23: Théophile Alexandre Steinlen. *Singing Victory*. Undated. Whereabouts unknown.

Figure 24: Jean-Julien Lemordant. *La Marseillaise*. Undated. Whereabouts unknown.

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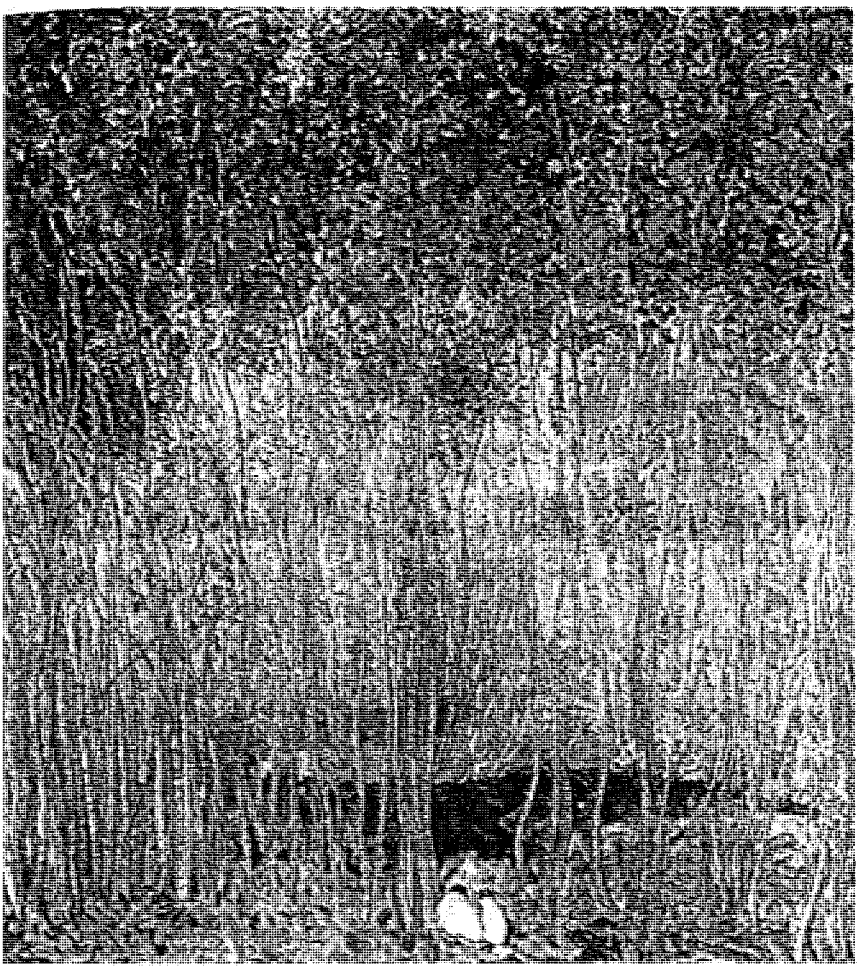

Figure 26: Eugene Higgins. *Jews in Poland.* Undated. Whereabouts unknown.

Figure 27: Vincent Van Gogh. *Portrait of Doctor Cachet*. 1899. Whereabouts unknown.

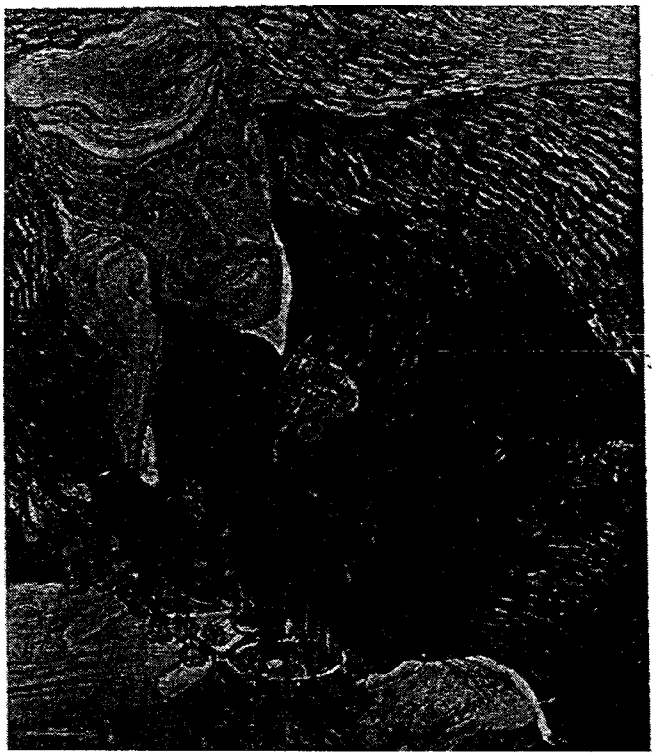

Figure 28: Mary Rogers. *The Dancers*. Undated. Whereabouts unknown.

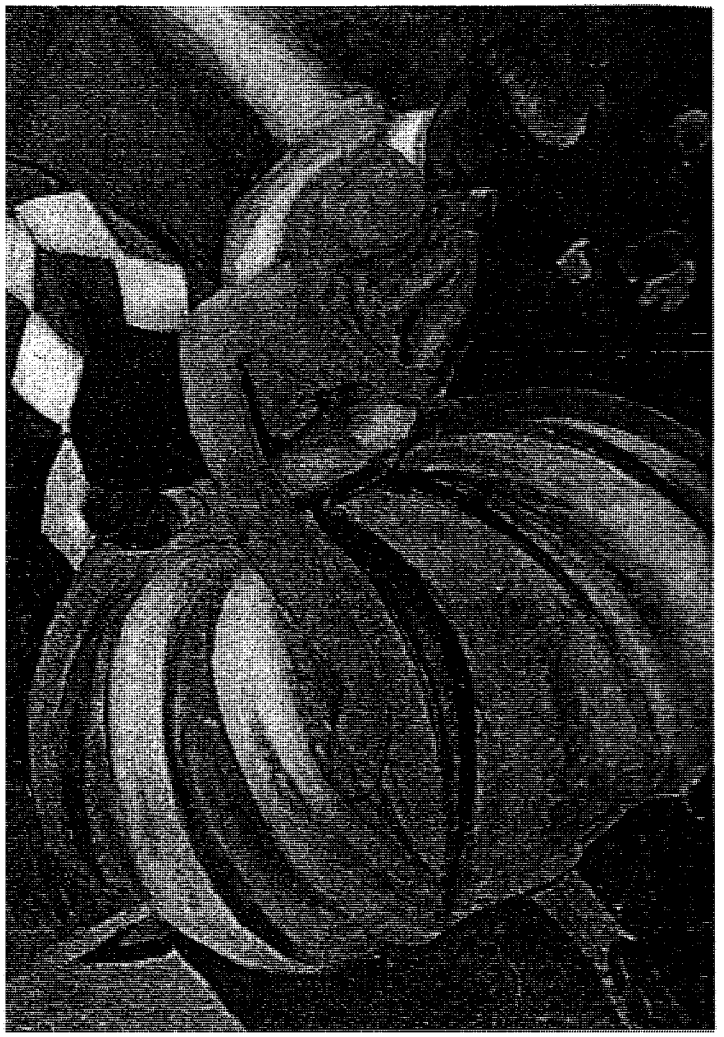

Figure 29: Eugene Carrière. *A Young Child*. Undated. Whereabouts unknown.